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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit focuses on the importance of Los Angeles (California) as a center for African American art and shows how African American artists have developed their own styles and how critics and collectors have encouraged them. The unit consists of four lessons, each of which can stand alone or be used in conjunction with the others. It opens with the reading "About African American Art." Four key artworks provide the curriculum unit's foundation. Extensive questions and answers given for each of the key artworks allow teachers and students to explore the pieces in depth. The first unit, "My Cultural Heritage and History," introduces students to the theme of cultural heritage and to artists' selection of subject matter; students collaborate to create a bulletin board that celebrates the class's cultural diversity and an assemblage that explores their own heritage. The second unit, "Styles of Cultural Expression," introduces students to the concept of style; they will explore stylistic influences through discussion and their own surrealist paintings. The third unit, "Interpreting Images," helps students evaluate images that stereotype people; students create a poster that contrasts commercial images with realistic ones and make a photographic essay of what it means for them to be a part of a family and community. The fourth unit, "Critics and Collectors," helps students analyze how artists, art critics, and art historians influence one another; students learn to write their own art criticism and organize a display that showcases the artistic heritage of their community. Contains extensive resources. (BT)

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African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

by Harriet Walker

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Dr. Harriet Walker, assistant professor of art education at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, is the author of African American Art: A Los Angeles Legacy. Dr. Bernard Young, professor of art at Arizona State University, provided valuable background information on the key artists and assistance with the unit's lesson plans and activities. Kathy Talley-Jones, project manager, revised the unit and produced the final version.

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African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

by Harriet Walker

Why is Los Angeles an important center for African American art?

How have African American artists developed their own unique styles?

How have critics and collectors encouraged African American artists?

These are some of the questions you and your students can consider as you examine four intriguing works by important African American artists who have lived and worked in Los Angeles. In this unit you will explore how African American history and heritage has been kept alive in the works of these artists and create artworks that reflect the cultural heritage of your students and community.

Lesson Plans: Overview and Recommended Sequence

African American Art: A Los Angeles Legacy consists of four lessons. Each lesson can stand alone or be used in conjunction with the others. Be sure to read About African American Art to gain an understanding of the conceptual framework of the unit. Four key artworks provide the foundation upon which the African American Art curriculum unit is based. Extensive questions and answers given for each of the key artworks allow teachers and students to explore the pieces in depth.

- **My Cultural Heritage and History** introduces students to the theme of cultural heritage and to artists' selection of subject matter. Students collaborate to create a bulletin board that celebrates the class's cultural diversity and an assemblage that explores their own heritage.

- **Styles of Cultural Expression** introduces students to the concept of style. They will explore stylistic influences through discussion and their own surrealist paintings.

- **Interpreting Images** helps students evaluate images that stereotype people. Students create a poster that contrasts commercial images with realistic ones and make a photographic essay of what it means for them to be a part of a family and community.

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- **Critics and Collectors** helps students analyze how artists, art critics, and art historians influence one another. Students learn to write their own art criticism and organize a display that showcases the artistic heritage of their community.

African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

Electronic and Other Resources

Note: Due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, some Web sites listed here may no longer be available.

African American History

Internet

African American Almanac
http://www.toptags.com/aama/index.htm

African American History
http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/

African American History Challenge
http://www.brightmoments.com/blackhistory/

African American Journey, World Book
http://www.worldbook.com/fun/aajourny/html/index.html

African American Mosaic, Library of Congress
http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html

African American Odyssey, Library of Congress
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/aohome.html

African American Perspectives, Library of Congress
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aaphome.html

African Americans in History, University of Georgia
http://www.uga.edu/~iaas/History.html

Africans in America, PBS
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html

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Original Writings by African Americans
http://curry.edschool.Virginia.EDU/go/multicultural/sites/aframdocs.html

Books

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1968). The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois. New York: International Publishers Company, Inc.

Franklin, J. H., and A. Moss (1994). From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans. New York: McGraw Hill.

Riches, W. (1997). The Civil Rights Movement: Struggle and Resistance. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Books for Young Readers

Bradford, S. H. (1994). Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People. New York: Applewood Books.

Lawrence, J. (1993, reissue). Harriet and the Promised Land. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Lester, J., and R. Brown (illustrator) (1998). From Slave Ship to Freedom Road. New York: Dial Books.

Ringgold, F. (1992). Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky. New York: Crown Books.

Ringgold, F. (1996). Bonjour, Lonnie. New York: Hyperion Press.

Schroeder, A., and J. Pinkney (illustrator) (1996). Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman. New York: Dial Books.

Thomas, V. M. (1997). Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation. New York: Crown Books.

Winter, J. (1992). Follow the Drinking Gourd. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

African American History in Los Angeles and California

Internet

California African American Museum
http://www.caam.ca.gov/

Golden State Mutual Insurance
www.gsmlife.org

History of African Americans in Los Angeles
http://www.blacklabiz.com

Books

Charles, R., and T. Igus (1992). Life in a Day of Black L.A.: The Way We See It. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Cox, B. Y. (1993). Central Avenue-Its Rise and Fall. Los Angeles: BEEM Publications.

Davis, Mike (1992). City of Quartz: Excavating the History in Los Angeles. New York: Vintage Books.

George, L. (1992). No Crystal Stair: African Americans in the City of Angels. New York: Doubleday.

Gooding-Williams, R. (ed.) (1993). Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising. New York: Routledge.

Home, G. (1997). Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s. New York: Da Capo Press.

Katz, W. L. (1987). The Black West. New York: Touchstone.

Kozo, C., and K. Kobayashi (1996). Shades of LA: Pictures from Ethnic Family Albums. New York: The New Press.

Smith, A. D. (1994). Twilight Los Angeles, 1992: On the Road: A Search for American Character. Garden City, NJ: Anchor Books.

Sonenshein, R. (1993). Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Takaki, R. (1993). A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Taylor, Q. (1998). In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

African American Art

ArtsEdNet

Romare Bearden, Artist of the Black Experience
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/Aeia/informs-lp.html

John Biggers, The Upper Room
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/DP/upper.html

John Biggers, The Web of Life: Art of John Biggers
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/Biggers/index.html

Michael Cummings, Springtime in Memphis: At Night (1979)
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/T/spring.html

David Hammons, The Door
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/door.html

Marie Johnson-Calloway, Hope Street: Church Mothers
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/hope.html

Lois Mailou Jones, Esquisse for Ode to Kinshasa
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/esquisse.html

John Outterbridge, Ethnic Heritage Series: California Crosswalk
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/ethnic.html

Betye Saar, The Liberation of Aunt Jemima
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/jemima.html

Henry Ossawa Tanner, Daniel in the Lion's Den
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/Stories/daniel.html

Henry Ossawa Tanner, The Banjo Player
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/banjo.html

Internet

African Americans in the Harmon Foundation Collection
http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/harmon/

African Americans in the Visual Arts: A Historical Perspective B. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html

African and African American Resources at the Smithsonian
http://www.si.edu/resource/tours/afafam/start.htm

ArtNoir: Afro-Art History
http://www.artnoir.com/history101.html

Black Arts Movement
http://www.umich.edu/~eng499/

Elizabeth Catlett
http://diaspora.sscnet.ucla.edu/Catlett/chilecivil.htm

Edmonia Lewis: Cleopatra Lost and Found, National Museum of American Art (includes VRML) http://nmaa-ryder.si.edu/collections/exhibits/lewis/index.html

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
http://www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html

Studio Museum in Harlem
http://www.studiomuseuminharlem.org/index.htm

University of Southern California African American Art Resources
http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/ethnicstudies/africanamerican/black_art.html

Carrie Mae Weems, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
http://www.rice.edu/projects/cam/cam_exhandprograms/cam_onlineexh/cam_weems/weems-index.html

Books

Bearden, R., and H. Henderson (1993). A History of African-American Artists. New York: Pantheon Books.

Campbell, M. S. (1985). Tradition and Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade, 1963-1973. New York: The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Driskell, D. (1976). Two Centuries of Black American Art. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Driskell, D. (ed.) (1996). African American Visual Aesthetics: A Postmodern View. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Henkes, R. (1993). The Art of Black American Women. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc.

Hooks, B. (1995). Art on My Mind: Visual Politics. New York: The New Press.

LaDuke, B. (1992). Women Artists: Multi-cultural Visions. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.

LeFalle-Collins, L., and S. Goldman (1996). In the Spirit of Resistance: African American Modernists and the Mexican Muralists School. New York: American Federation of Arts.

Lewis, S. (1994). African American Art and Artists, revised edition. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lippard, L. (1990). Mixed Blessings: New Art in Multicultural America. New York: Pantheon Books.

Powell, R. (1997). Black Art and Culture in the Twentieth Century. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Reynolds, G. (1989). Against the Odds: African American Artists and the Harmon Foundation. Newark, NJ: Newark Museum.

Riggs, M. (producer and director) (1987). Ethnic Notions: Black People in White Minds (video). Available from California Newsreel, 149 9th Street/420, San Francisco, CA 94103; 415/621-6196.

Sullivan, G. (1996). Black Artists in Photography 1840-1940. New York: Dutton Cobblehill Books.

Thompson, R. F. (1983). Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy. New York: Vintage Books.

Time-Life Books (eds.) (1994). Voices of Triumph: Creative Fire. New York: Time-Life, Inc.

Artist: Willie Robert Middlebrook

Internet

Excerpt from "Race and Contemporary Photography: Willie Robert Middlebrook and the Legacy of Frederick Douglass" by John Stauffer, 21st: The Journal of Contemporary Photography http://www.oncapecod.net/tfirst/excerpts.htm#stauffer

Willie Robert Middlebrook, artist in residence, Light Works, Syracuse, NY
http://sumweb.syr.edu/com_dark/middlbrk.html

Willie Robert Middlebrook, early work
http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Museum/1180/

Willie Robert Middlebrook, statement
http://home.pacbell.net/wrmbrook/state.html

Willie Robert Middlebrook, Web site
http://home.pacbell.net/wrmbrook/wrm.html

Other Resources

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1995). "Exhibition History and Biography of Willie Robert Middlebrook." Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Middlebrook, W. R. (1995). "Artist's Statement: In His Own Image, from the Series Portraits of My People." Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Artist: Betye Saar

Internet

Betye Saar, curriculum unit, Yale-New Haven Teachers College
http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1996/3/96.03.10.x.html#f

Betye Saar, Personal Icons, de Saisset Museum, San Jose, CA
http://www.sjliving.com/Saar.html

Betye Saar, recent exhibition history, Art in Context
http://www.artincontext.org/artist/s/betye_saar/selected_exhibitions.htm

Betye Saar and John Outterbridge, New Zealand Biennale
http://sunsite.wits.ac.za/biennale/catalog/usa.htm

House of Ancient Memory, ArtsNet, Minnesota
http://www.artsnetmn.org/inner/saar.html

Other Resources

Billingslea-Brown, A.J. (1999). Crossing Borders through Folklore: African American Women's Fiction and Art. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Lippard, L. (1990). "Sapphire and Ruby in the Indigo Garden." In Secrets, Dialogues, Revelations: The Art of Betye and Alison Saar, ed. E. Shepard, 10-20. Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery.

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Reed, I. (1990). "Saar Dust: An Interview with Betye Saar." In Secrets, Dialogues, Revelations: The Art of Betye and Alison Saar, ed. E. Shepard, 32-50. Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery.

Saar, B. (1998). Ritual and Remembrance/Personal Icons: The Recent Work of Betye Saar. Los Angeles: California African-American Museum.

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Voyager (1998). Betye Saar: Digital Griot (CD-ROM).

Willette, J. (1997). "Stitching Lives: Fabric in the Art of Betye Saar." Fiberarts (March/April), 44-48.

Wright, B. (1989). "Interview with Betye Saar." In The Appropriate Object, pp. 54-59. Buffalo, NY: Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

Artist: Charles White

Biggers, J. (1980). "His Influence Caused Me to Turn Out Little Charles Whites." Freedomways 20 (3): 175.

Clothier, P. (1980). "The Story of White's Art Is the Story of a Struggle." Freedomways 20 (3): 144.

Heritage Gallery (1967). Images of Dignity: The Drawings of Charles White. Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press.

Horowitz, B. (1967). "Commentary." Images of Dignity: The Drawings of Charles White, 7-28. Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press.

Lovos, J. (1962). "The Remarkable Draughtsmanship of Charles White." American Artist 243 (1): 102.

Pittman, J. (1980). "He Was an Implacable Critic of His Own Creations." Freedomways 20 (3): 191.

White, C. (n.d.). White on Black Art (cassette recording). Los Angeles: Golden State

Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Wyatt, R. (1980). "His Special Gift for Teaching." Freedomways 20 (3): 177-78.

Artist: Hale Woodruff

Internet

Hale Woodruff, biography and photography, Indianapolis Museum of Art
http://www.ima-art.org/specexhibits/sharedheritage/woodruffbio.html

Hale Woodruff, nonrepresentational work
http://www.nku.edu/~diesmanj/PAINTERS.HTML

Hale Woodruff's The Amistad Mutiny
http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/amistad/AMISTD.htm

Hale Woodruff's The Amistad Mutiny
http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/amistad/AMI_IMAG.HTM

Hale Woodruff's The Amistad Mutiny
http://amistad.mysticseaport.org/library/images/trial&captivity/talladega.trial.jpg

Other Resources

Bernard, C. (1989). Afro-American Artists in Paris: 1919-1939. New York: Hunter College of the City University of New York.

Coker, G. (1979). "Art as History and Epic: The Murals." In Hale Woodruff: Fifty Years of His Art, 59-70. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.

Golden State Mutual Life (n.d.). Historical Murals. Los Angeles: Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Jennings, C. (1996). "Hale Woodruff: African-American Metaphor, Myth, and Allegory." In A Shared Heritage: Art by Four African Americans, ed. W. E. Taylor and H. Warkel, 78-97. Indianapolis, IN: Indianapolis Museum of Art.

McDaniel, M. (1985). "Reexamining Hale Woodruff's Talladega College and Atlanta University Murals." The International Review of African American Art: 5-17.

Murray, A. (1979). "An Interview with Hale Woodruff." In Hale Woodruff: Fifty Years of His Art, 71-88. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.

Schmidt Campbell, M. (1979). "Hale Woodruff: Fifty Years of His Art." In Hale Woodruff: Fifty Years of His Art, 29-58. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.

Studio Museum in Harlem (1979). Hale Woodruff: Fifty Years of His Art. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.

Art Historical Styles

Style Characteristics, ArtsNet, Minnesota
http://www.artsnetmn.org/style.html

Impressionism

National Gallery of Art impressionism tour
http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg86/gg86-main1.html

Re-creation of the first impressionism exhibit
http://www.artchive.com/74nadar.htm

Expressionism and Fauvism

WebMuseum essay
http://metalab.unc.edu/wm/paint/tl/20th/expressionism.html

Cubism

Picasso and cubism
http://metalab.unc.edu/wm/paint/tl/20th/cubism.html

Surrealism

Surrealism
http://pharmdec.wustl.edu/juju/surr/

Miscellaneous Resources

Internet

ArtsEdge Resources on Harriet Tubman
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/student/harriet.html

Gordon Parks
http://www.genesisartline.com/gordonparks.htm

Gordon Parks, Milwaukee Art Museum
http://www.gallery-guide.com/museum/milwauke/exhib/

James Van der Zee
http://www.artn.nwu.edu/avantHistory/index.html

James Van der Zee
http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/graphics/wedding4.html

James Van der Zee
http://www.lightfactory.org/SlideRegistry/zeemovie.html

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DeGraaf, L. B. (1974). Negro Migration to Los Angeles 1930 to 1950. Saratoga, CA: R. and E Research Associates.

Dover, C. (1960). American Negro Art. New York: Graphic Society.

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Gayle, A. (ed.) (1971). The Black Aesthetic. New York: Doubleday.

Hill, P. (1983). Social Concern and Urban Realism: American Painting of the 1930s. Boston: Boston University Art Gallery.

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Karenga, R. (1971). "Black Cultural Nationalism." In The Black Aesthetic, ed. A. Gayle, 32-38. New York: Doubleday.

Lerner, G. (1972). Black Women in White America. New York: Vintage Books.

Locke, A. (1925). The New Negro. New York: Albert and Charles Boni.

Meier, A., and E. Rudwick (1976). From Plantation to Ghetto. New York: Hill and Wang.

Morgan, E. (1991). The Sixties Experience: Hard Lessons about Modern America. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Munro, E. (1979). Originals: American Women Artists. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Porter, J. (1943). Modern Negro Art. New York: Dryden Press.

Teish, L. (1985). Jambalaya: The Natural Woman's Book. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.

African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

About African American Art

African American Art: A Los Angeles Legacy is a unit within the curriculum resource Worlds of Art. The unit consists of four lesson plans that focus on African American art in Los Angeles.

African American Art uses a discipline-based approach to art education; the lessons are interdisciplinary, thematic, and inquiry based. Each lesson can stand alone or be used in conjunction with the others.

- African American Art Unit Theme
- African American Art Key Inquiry Questions
- Los Angeles Connections
- Interdisciplinary Connections
- Invitation to Contribute Student Work

African American Art Unit Theme

We all have a cultural heritage and history that we can draw on for a sense of identity and self-worth.

The people of the United States share elements of a common American culture, yet our roots tap ancient beliefs, values, and ways of doing things that developed independently around the world. Unfortunately, the cultural heritage and history of some groups, such as African Americans, have been largely invisible until recently in the mainstream history of this country.

The Africans who were brought to colonial America as slaves left behind ancient traditions in textile production, metalworking, wood carving, oral history, music, and dance. Despite slavery, segregation laws, economic exploitation, and racial violence, African Americans retained some African cultural influences, all the while affecting and being influenced by mainstream culture. African Americans who have worked as fine artists have contributed to the transmission and perpetuation of their cultural heritage and history. Their art expresses the everyday struggles and triumphs of the African American people.

Art helps keep cultural memories and overlooked histories alive.

African American Art Key Inquiry Questions

African American Art addresses three key inquiry questions:

1. Subject Matter: What subject matter (people, places, or things) does the artwork depict, if anything?

2. Style: How does this artwork look like other artworks?

3. Artworld Viewer: How did the person(s) for whom the artwork was made (for example, a patron, user, or other viewer of the time) understand it?

These three key inquiry questions guide the formulation of objectives within the unit's lessons. Activities within the lessons follow through on the questions. Assessment guides provide structure for determining whether your students have come to understand the questions.

As students learn how to use these three inquiry questions to guide their understanding of the artworks, they can transfer that ability not only to their viewing of and reflecting on any artwork they might wish to more fully understand but also to their own art making.

Los Angeles Connections

People of African ancestry played an important role in the founding and development of the city of Los Angeles. When forty-four Spanish settlers established the tiny village of Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles (Our Lady the Queen of the Angels) in the late eighteenth century, twenty-six of the newcomers had African ancestors. Throughout the nineteenth century, the descendants of these settlers continued to be influential. Pio Pico, for example, for whom Pico Boulevard is named, was a governor of California who had African ancestors.

The population of Los Angeles exploded during the California gold rush in the late 1840s. When California became part of the United States, laws were passed forbidding slavery, but slave owners were allowed to bring slaves into California without freeing them. Few African Americans were among the forty-niners, but many were brought to California to work as slaves in the mines or as house servants. Following the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, African Americans founded agricultural settlements throughout California's Central Valley. Those who lived in Los Angeles were mainly domestic workers or midwives, farmers or handymen. White Angelenos kept African Americans in their place with housing and employment restrictions, and the Black population remained small. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, a trickle and

then an ever-growing tide of people began migrating out of the South to seek jobs in Los Angeles.

By 1930, thirty-eight thousand African Americans lived in Los Angeles. Central Avenue became known as Jazz Street and the Harlem of the West. It was there that the early Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company had opened its doors in 1925. In the 1940s, when Los Angeles suffered a labor shortage, eight hundred thousand African Americans left the South hoping to find work and a measure of freedom. However, by the time Hale Woodruff was painting one of the Negro in California History murals for the new Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company building on West Adams Boulevard in 1949, African American people found themselves once again struggling with overcrowded conditions and joblessness.

As a restlessness with social circumstances took hold of African Americans throughout the United States in the 1950s, they started a movement for social change. Despite the successes of the civil rights movement, in 1965, the year Charles White created General Moses (Harriet Tubman), Los Angeles was the scene of the nation's largest race rebellion to date. The desperation that led to the Watts riot also fueled the Black Power movement, and by 1968, cultural nationalism had inspired an outpouring of art, music, and literature known as the Black Arts movement. As the American public became less concerned with civil rights in the 1970s, Betye Saar's works, such as Nine Mojo Secrets, signified the healing of a community that had been torn by despair and violence.

Social and economic reform brought the violent upheavals to an end in the 1970s, but during the 1980s many federal social programs were cut and unemployment again mounted. In a climate of growing poverty and distrust, Los Angeles exploded once more, this time in 1992, after a controversial verdict in a racially charged case. The reaction to the verdict is the subject of Willie Robert Middlebrook's In His Own Image, from the photographic series Portraits of My People.

For more information on the history of African Americans in Southern California, see Electronic and Other Resources.

Interdisciplinary Connections

The main focus of African American Art is learning in art. In addition, learning in a number of other content areas is addressed in specific lessons. **My Cultural Heritage and History** includes social studies content and offers a supplementary social studies activity. **Styles of Cultural Expression** includes a supplementary language arts activity. **Interpreting Images** also includes a supplementary language arts activity. **Critics and Collectors** includes social studies and language arts content.

You may wish to consult the California Frameworks, which lists standards in various content areas, in order to build additional interdisciplinary connections.

Invitation to Contribute Student Work

As you view the African American Art lesson plans, you will notice that samples of student work are available for some of the activities. Would you like to try one of the lessons and submit samples of your students' work?

Here's what to do:
Send a message to us at artsednet@getty.edu with a URL of the Web site where relevant lesson plans and student work are posted. We will link to them from the appropriate place in this unit.

African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

Key Artworks

Four key artworks provide the foundation upon which the African American Art curriculum unit is based. Two of the artworks are by contemporary artists in the Los Angeles area; the other two are by artists who once lived and worked in Los Angeles. Extensive questions and answers given for each of the key artworks allow teachers and students to explore the artworks in depth.

- Willie Robert Middlebrook, In His Own Image, from the series Portraits of My People http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/African/ Middlebrook/ index.html
- Betye Saar, Nine Mojo Secrets
- Charles White, General Moses (Harriet Tubman)
- Hale Woodruff, The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development

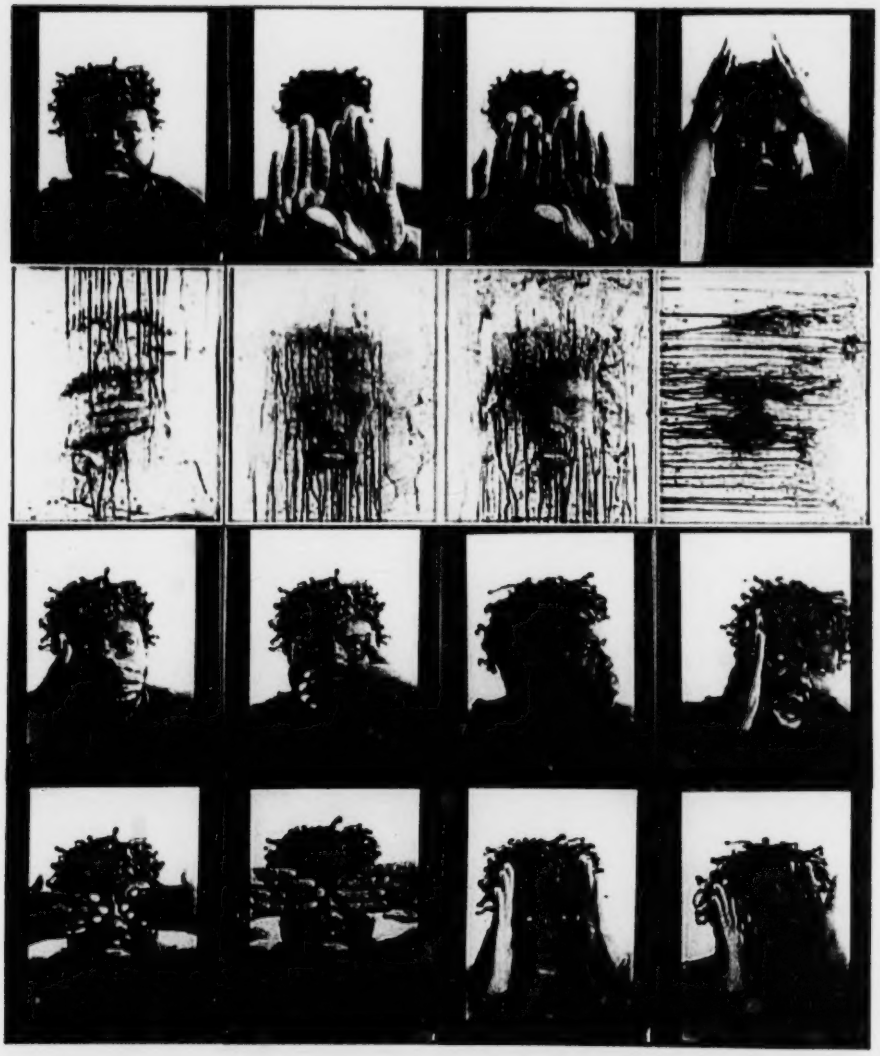
African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

Key Artwork: In His Own Image

Willie Robert Middlebrook
(b. 1957)
In His Own Image, from the series Portraits of My People
1992
Photographs; gelatin silver prints
96 x 80 in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Look at the expressions on this man's face. What do you see? Through a series of sixteen photographs, some of them smeared and dripped with chemicals, Los Angeles artist Willie Robert Middlebrook expresses his reaction to the 1992 verdict of Los Angeles police officers accused of beating motorist Rodney King. The artwork is part of a series, Portraits of My People, in which Middlebrook explores African Americans and their communities. Middlebrook says that his photography "helps me to hold, to seize for a permanent record, every facet of life that comes before my eyes...to communicate to all, to all willing to listen" (Middlebrook, 1998).



Willie Robert Middlebrook, In His Own Image, from the series Portraits of My People

http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/African/Middlebrook/index.html

Key Artwork: In His Own Image
Information about the Art Maker or Artwork

What can I find out about the art maker or artwork?

Art Maker

Who made the artwork? What are the circumstances of the art maker's life?

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1957, Willie Robert Middlebrook moved with his family to Compton, California, when he was three years old. His parents instilled in him strong social and aesthetic convictions. Recognizing his artistic ability, they enrolled him in classes at the Compton Communicative Arts Academy and then at the Watts Towers Arts Center, directed by the artist John Outterbridge. Middlebrook's father told him that his artistic ability came from his grandfather, a slave who had earned his freedom, taught himself to write, and fathered two families. Middlebrook says, "At night when I close my eyes my grandfather sings to me, 'Look at you, you are the land. Look at you, you see me'" (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1995).

In 1978 Middlebrook graduated from Compton College with a degree in art/photography; in 1980 he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the California College of Art. Since then he has taught community workshops and classes at the Watts Towers Arts Center, Junior Arts Center, and Los Angeles Photography Center. Between 1987 and 1992 he taught at California State University, Los Angeles. Middlebrook was named Outterbridge's successor as director of the Watts Towers Arts Center in 1993.

Middlebrook, a husband, father of five, and grandfather, considers his work a collaboration between himself and his family and friends. He intends it to speak to and about African American people and communities: "After spending almost all of my preadult and the majority of my adult life seeing negative, non-quality or no images at all, of my people, I decided that there was a need to direct my focus exclusively to producing great images of my people; not necessarily in a positive light, but always in a true light" (Middlebrook, 1998). Middlebrook's work can be found in many private and public collections around the country, including the Shreveport Regional Arts Council in Louisiana, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the California African-American Museum in Los Angeles.

Subject Matter

What subject matter (people, places, or things) does the artwork depict, if anything?

The sixteen prints that make up In His Own Image are photographs Middlebrook has taken of himself in various poses. In one image he faces the viewer, in another he looks off to the left, and in others he uses his hands to shield his face from the camera, to hold the top of his head, or to cover his mouth, eyes, or ears. In one photograph he appears to cry out while holding a hand up to his face. In four of the photographs, lines that appear to be made by a dripping liquid conceal the artist's face.

Technical Features

How was the artwork made? (tools, materials, and processes)

The artist posed himself in front of the camera for these images. He used straightforward black-and-white photography for twelve of the pictures (they also have added brown tones). The other four were altered with a chemical process as they were being developed so that they appear smeared or scratched out with brown tones and drips of brown liquid.

Sensory Elements

What visual elements do I see in the artwork? (line, color, shape, light and dark, texture, mass, and space)

The artist's face and hands take up most of the space in each photograph. In twelve of them the negative space behind Middlebrook is left white. Although the subject is dark—a man with dark hair and a dark complexion wearing a black shirt—a light source on the left illuminates the right side of his face and parts of his hands and arms. The four photographs that have been altered are brown and have dark lines partially concealing the model's face. Three of the images have vertical lines; one has horizontal lines.

Formal Organization

How do the elements in the artwork work together? (For example, are parts repeated, balanced, emphasized, contrasted?)

The artwork is organized like a contact sheet (a set of all the pictures on a roll of film a photographer looks at before deciding which to develop as prints). There are four rows of four images each, one row of which has been altered. Middlebrook's face is repeated in all sixteen of the photographs, although in four of them dripping lines and brown smears obscure it. This one row of brown, smudged pictures contrasts with the three rows of black, brown, and white realistic likenesses that are each enclosed within black edges. The photographs are balanced asymmetrically, with one row of four realistic pictures above the row of altered images and two beneath it. Three of the altered

photographs have vertical lines; one has horizontal lines. Although each of the realistic pictures includes the artist's face and/or hands, each pose is different, giving each photograph equal value and interest and encouraging the viewer to look at each part of the artwork.

Reproduction

How is the reproduction (digitized or printed image) different from the original artwork? (size, angle of view, surface texture, etc.)

The reproduction is a small, single, digitized image. The original is made up of sixteen gelatin silver prints, each twenty-four-by-twenty inches, that are installed on a ninety-six-by-eighty-inch grid.

Contextual Information

What can I find out about when and where the artwork was made?

Functional Context

How is/was the artwork used?

Through the expressions on Middlebrook's face, the viewer can share in the artist's feelings about the police brutality toward Rodney King and the results of the trial that sparked a violent upheaval in South Central Los Angeles in 1992.

Cultural Context

What can I determine about what people thought, believed, or did in the culture in which the artwork was made?

Beginning in the 1970s, South Central Los Angeles became an increasingly economically isolated area of the city as the community changed from being African American to Latino and African American. Many Black shop owners moved out, selling to Korean immigrants. Industries that had once provided unionized jobs sought alternative sites for their manufacturing activities, leaving many African Americans and Latinos unemployed or employed at menial labor that paid less than the minimum wage. Most residents of South Central Los Angeles were living below the poverty level during the 1980s when the Reagan and Bush administrations cut funding for community-based organizations, social service programs, job training, and subsidized housing (additionally, President Bush had run on a campaign in 1988 that linked crime and race, exploiting White fears and contributing to the public perception of the lawlessness of African American men). The 1990 beating of the motorist Rodney King in Los Angeles

was an incident in a historic legacy of police violence toward African American males.

As the videotape of the beating of King was broadcast to the nation, African American men recognized themselves and their local police forces in the assault. However, this time, White Americans could also see the truth of police brutality, and African Americans expected them to be appalled by what they saw. Instead, on April 29, 1992, the Black community was stunned by the not guilty verdicts for the police officers who participated in the beating. This verdict came only months after a probation sentence was given to a Korean store owner who had shot a fifteen-year-old African American honor student named Latasha Harlins in the back of the head. Both verdicts reinforced the belief that the criminal justice system did not work, and the anger by African Americans and Latinos exploded into burning and looting to which the police department initially failed to respond. In the aftermath of the violence, Angelenos discovered that fifty-two people had been killed, twenty-five hundred injured, and $1 billion worth of property lost or damaged.

Artworld Context

What can I learn about the art ideas, beliefs, and activities that were important in the culture in which the artwork was made?

Beginning with Jules Lion, a free man of color from France who brought the daguerreotype process to New Orleans in 1839, photography has played an important role in the lives of African Americans. Some were able to achieve success for their work as photographers, such as:

- Augustus Washington, who set up a daguerreotype studio in Hartford, Connecticut;
- James P. Ball, who assembled a six-hundred-foot-long panorama of photos and paintings that traveled around the country;
- William Wallace and Glenalvin Goodridge, who produced several series of stereographs and a history of Saginaw, Michigan;
- Cornelius Battey, who established the Tuskegee School of Photography;
- Prentice Polk, a master portraitist who graduated from Tuskegee;
- Addison Scurlock and his sons George and Robert of Washington, D.C., who ran one of the most successful African American portrait studios in theUnited States;
- James Van der Zee, who chronicled the Harlem Renaissance; and
- Gordon Parks and Eugene Smith, who photographed the Great Depression.

This history of African American camera work was extended to Los Angeles with Bob Douglas, who photographed musicians during the 1940s, and continues with contemporary artists such as:

- Roland Charles, who photographs African American culture and lifestyles;

- Akili Ramsess, who documented the changes on Central Avenue;
- Nathanial Bellamy, who has concentrated on homelessness; and
- Willie Robert Middlebrook, who has photographed his own family and friends to show the human condition through the lives of ordinary African American people.

Cameras, according to art historian bell hooks, "gave to Black folks, irrespective of class, a means by which we could participate fully in the production of images" (Hooks, 1995, p. 57). It was those images, displayed on walls and tables in African American homes, that provided a hedge against degrading stereotypes."They constituted private, Black owned and operated gallery space where images could be displayed, shown to friends and strangers. These walls were a space where, in the midst of segregation, the hardship of apartheid, dehumanization could be countered" (Hooks, 1995, p. 59).

In addition to allowing African Americans to represent themselves, photographs provide a way to document reality and to preserve history. Viewing photographs of the strength and resilience of African Americans in their everyday lives can help educate all racial and ethnic groups about skewed stereotypes. The Los Angeles Public Library, in one such effort, has been collecting old photos to reconstruct the lost histories of ethnic communities in Los Angeles (published in 1996 as Shades of L.A.). In Life in a Day of Black L.A.: The Way We See It (1992), African American photographers present an insider's view of the African American community as well as a side of the events following the Rodney King verdict that was not part of televised newscasts.

Viewpoints for Interpretation

What can I find out about what the artwork meant to people when and where it was made and what it means to people now?

Art Maker

Why did the art maker want the artwork to look the way it does?

The following statement from Willie Robert Middlebrook accompanies In His Own Image:

As far back as I can remember, my parents would tell us (me and my brothers), that "God created man in his image; that we were created equal; that all people were created equal; that right wins over wrong; be good and good things happen to you."

> On April 29 everything my parents told me went right out the window; we are not equal; right does not win over wrong; God did create men in his own image, as long as you're not Black. I came to this conclusion from the first time I heard

> the verdicts that were handed down in the [Rodney] King Case and from watching and listening to how the media covered the aftermath of the verdicts.
>
> The work In His "Own" Image is just a reminder that we are just people. The work is about one man, an African American Male. Through the expressions on his face the viewer gets to share in some of what was felt...what he felt, on April 29, 1992 and prior to that. (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1995)

Artworld Viewer

How did the person(s) for whom the artwork was made (for example, a patron, user, or other viewer of the time) understand it?

Middlebrook's art has been well received both locally and nationally. In 1982 he received a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) fellowship for his documentary project on the Watts community, Watts Revisited: Beyond the First Look. In 1987 the City of Compton named Middlebrook a Hometown Hero; in 1992 he received another NEA fellowship for his Portraits of My People series. In 1987, 1990, and 1991 he was recognized by the Los Angeles City Council for his contributions to photography. Between 1994 and 1996 Middlebrook made a series, named The God Suite, of mixed-media assemblage works that include photography. In 1995 he completed a mural on porcelain-enamel steel panels for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Currently he is working on Black Angels, a series of pieces produced by manipulating photographic images on a computer.

Cultural Understanding

How was the artwork understood within the culture in which it was made?

In addition to capturing truthful representations and preserving history, photographs have also played an important role in the African American struggles for liberation. Prior to the Civil War, African American abolitionists spoke around the country, and some of those who had escaped from slavery wrote narratives of their lives in bondage in order to raise white moral consciousness about the evils of slavery. During the civil rights movement, images of violence by Whites against Blacks were projected on television screens across the nation, producing moral outrage and influencing the signing into law of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.

The images of Rodney King being beaten by the police came as no surprise to African Americans, but they expected that White Americans would also see the injustice and respond with moral outrage. The not guilty verdicts shattered these hopes. The trial of

the officers signified all the trials in which the White defendants had gone free after committing violent acts against African Americans; only in this case, everyone in the United States could see the actual videotape of the violence. African American hopes for democracy and justice, in spite of high rates of unemployment, malnutrition, substandard housing, underfunded public schools, and frightening levels of everyday violence in inner-city ghettos, all in the midst of affluence, collapsed under the weight of the trial. African Americans would have understood the disbelief and feelings of betrayal that this artwork portrays.

Other Viewpoints

Are there other people's viewpoints you want to consider? If so, whose?

Others viewpoints to consider include those of other groups who suffer from discrimination in California and throughout the United States.

Connections among Artworks

What can I find out about connections between this artwork and other artworks?

Style

How does this artwork look like other artworks?

The social content of this artwork is like that in the work of many African American artists who use their art to express the highly political circumstances and struggles for racial equality that reflect their experiences. The realistic portraits on a white background are similar to Charles White's drawings of African American people. The altered images resemble his Wanted Posters series, in which human faces peer out of hazy, sepia-toned backgrounds, contradicting stereotypes of African Americans and highlighting the inhuman treatment often handed them.

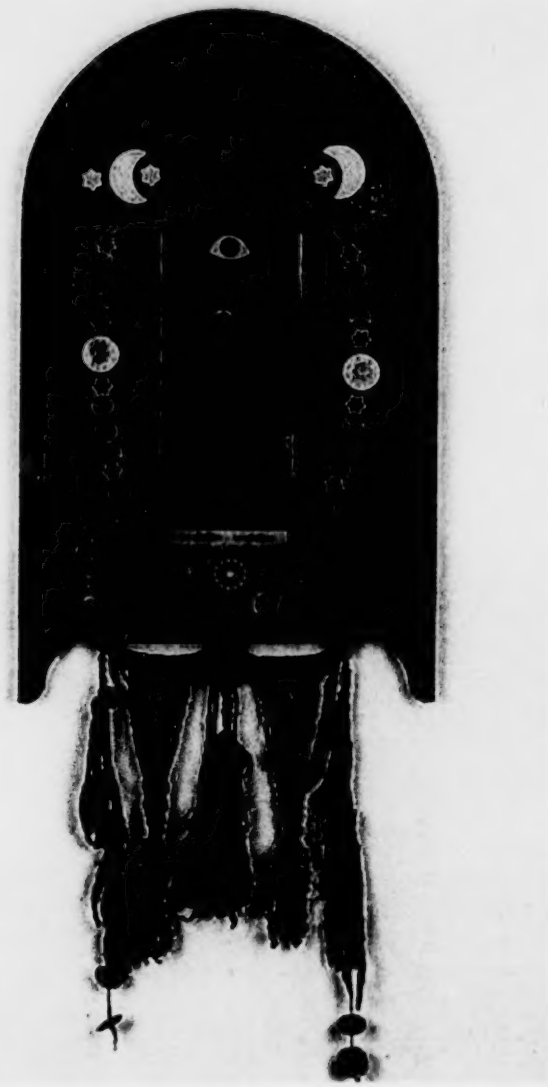
Themes

What general ideas help connect this artwork to other artworks?

The theme of this work is the injustice of the criminal justice system in the United States. Like Middlebrook, David Hammons has also used his own body to portray injustice. The Door (1969) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images /S/door.html], a work that shows the shape of a human figure on the outside of a door, implicitly declares that because of racial barriers, admission is not open to everyone in society. His Injustice Case (1970) moves to the courtroom to show the bound and gagged figure of the former Black Panther Party leader Bobby Seale in a highly

publicized 1969 trial.

In His Own Image is also about truthful representations of African Americans as a means of contradicting negative societal stereotypes. Henry Ossawa Tanner's Banjo Lesson (1893) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/banjo.html] repudiated the minstrel image prevalent around the turn of the century by portraying a dignified image of a man teaching a child how to play the banjo. Charles White's Wanted Posters [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/wanted.html] give a human face and presence to African American people who were hunted down for escaping from slavery. General Moses (Harriet Tubman) (1965) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/DP/general.html] shows the determination and social consciousness of this African American woman, who not only led hundreds of slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad but also participated in the Civil War as a nurse and established a home for elderly African Americans. Betye Saar's Liberation of Aunt Jemima (1972) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/jemima.html] has taken a stereotype of African American women that is still prevalent in society and imbued it with power and self-determination.



African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

Key Artwork: Nine Mojo Secrets

http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/mojo-xl.jpeg

Betye Saar
(b. 1926)
Nine Mojo Secrets
1971
Assemblage; wood, paint, photograph, paper, feathers, plastic figures, fiber, seeds, and beads
49 3/4 x 23 1/2 x 1 3/4 in.
California African-American Museum, Los Angeles

Always a collector, and influenced by the fantastic assortment of found objects used by Simon Rodia in building Watts Towers, Los Angeles-born artist Betye Saar has been inspired to recycle objects in her own art. She chooses materials that have been discarded by their owners but that still contain the power of their spirit. She considers the art-making process a ritual that includes the thoughtful participation of the viewer. Nine Mojo Secrets was made during a time wh African American hopes for a more democratic society were dimming. It evokes both the mystical process of calling upon the spirits of beloved ancestors for protection and the use of mojo, a magical power, to bring about healing and harmony.

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Key Artwork: Nine Mojo Secrets

Information about the Art Maker or Artwork

What can I find out about the art maker or artwork?

Art Maker

Who made the artwork? What are the circumstances of the art maker's life?

Born in Pasadena, California, in 1926, Betye Saar remembers being clairvoyant until the death of her father when she was six years old. Her mother, as a widow during the Great Depression, supplemented the household income by working as a seamstress, creating an environment that contained colorful scraps of material and where everything was recycled. Saar often spent her summers near Watts with her grandmother, formerly from Louisiana, who would tell Saar stories about working as a midwife and in a Works Progress Administration (WPA) sewing factory. Saar remembers her own passion for collecting stray objects: "My grandmother didn't have a car and she lived half a block from a railroad track. Once a week, we'd walk down that track to Watts to do the shopping and I'd be picking up objects all the way" (Munro, 1979, p. 356). Her grandmother also lived just blocks from the Watts Towers, which were being built by the Italian immigrant Simon Rodia. This architectural sculpture was to have a lasting effect on Saar's own artwork.

Saar began her formal training in art as a design major at the University of California, Los Angeles. Graduating in 1949, she had an early career as a designer and graphic artist. In 1958 she returned to school, graduating from California State University, Northridge, in 1966.

Saar is the mother of three children. She has said that making art is very much like motherhood—mothers give life and nurture children through their rites of passage; art as ritual gives a sense of importance to the commemoration of these events in life.

Saar's early prints contained occult imagery; later she began making ritualistic objects using a box format. These artworks, with their mystical images, rows of stacked boxes, and assemblage of bits and pieces of various items, became objects of power—a medium between the spiritual world and the viewer. Some of her works during this period, such as Nine Mojo Secrets, are fetish pieces, framed within windowpanes, that refer to African religion and African American folklore.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s Saar created a series of pieces on stereotypes as a means of empowering and healing those whose psyches had been harmed by racist images. In The Liberation of Aunt Jemima (1972)[http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/

ArtsEdNet/Images/X/jemima.html], for example, a Black fist in front of the advertising emblem symbolizes the Black Power movement. According to Saar, Jemima "was a slave or a servant, but at the same time, a warrior, because it was about survival, about saving her children. [The image] was picked up by the feminist movement and became a symbol, but it was about the rights of African Americans—the rage that came up was my concern at the time" (Lovelace, 1997, p. 144). Since then, however, Saar has turned her art around to act as a ritual means to help with emotions and deal with pain. She has been interested in the reclamation of African American history, rescuing and restoring the humble objects through which it has survived, and then enshrining them as a public healing process.

Subject Matter

What subject matter (people, places, or things) does the artwork depict, if anything?

Nine Mojo Secrets is about the mysteries of life that are embodied in ancient systems of holistic belief in the relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds. The artwork is inside a wooden frame that is in the shape of a rectangle with a semicircular (crescent) top. This shape is repeated in a smaller interior frame. Inside the smaller frame is a picture of the Luba people of Central Africa participating in a ceremony; above them is projected a large hand containing a mystic eye. Between the larger wooden frame and the smaller inner frame, the area has been divided into nine spaces. There are four spaces around the crescent top of the inner frame: one contains a symbol of the sun, another a crescent moon, and two have a crescent moon surrounded by two stars. The long rectangular shapes on each side of the inner frame contain a sun in the center of a line of full and crescent moons and stars. In the squares in each of the bottom corners are small feathers and a plastic skeleton. In the central square beneath the small frame there is a symbol of a radiating sun along with a small white mask and a lion. On the lower edge of the frame hangs a skirt of fiber, seeds, and beads.

Technical Features

How was the artwork made? (tools, materials, and processes)

Not only does Saar create ritual objects, her process of making art is also a ritual that includes both her role as a medium and the role of the viewer as participant. Saar has studied phrenology (the study of the skull's shape as a way of understanding a person's character), palmistry, voodoo, shamanism, and the occult. As an artist, she acts as a seer, perceiving the hidden properties of discarded objects from past lives and reviving the energy of these objects by assembling them into works of art.

Saar has explained the set of acts that constitute the ritual process through which she makes art:

- First is the imprint—the ideas, thoughts, memories, and dreams from the past, present and future. These are the details of her life, such as the memories of her childhood, her role as a mother, the politics of the 1960s, her artistic training, and her study of ancient religious beliefs.

- Second is search and collecting. Just as an archaeologist picks through the rubble of an ancient civilization, Saar gathers discarded objects from flea markets and botanicas (herb shops), using her intuition to sense the energy of the items' former owners. For example, fabric that has been worn, cried on, bled on, sweated in, torn, mended, and handed down is full of stories and memories.

- Third is the gathering together of objects and materials, whether traditional or new, organic or technical, that bring an evocative, mnemonic, magical, or seductive energy to the end product.

- Fourth is the recycling and transformation of the objects into an artistic form, such as a collage, assemblage, altar, or installation. Materials are brought together to integrate and expand their energy and to acquire a kind of poetry that encourages viewers to imagine their past lives.

- Fifth is the sharing, exhibiting, and experiencing of the work. As they interpret the art and reflect on their own personal experiences, viewers may gain wisdom that will allow them to confront their fears and pain by understanding the continuity of death and rebirth.

This completes the ritual. Through this process, Saar's artwork becomes a celebration of the life that she holds out for others to share.

Sensory Elements

What visual elements do I see in the artwork? (line, color, shape, light and dark, texture, mass, and space)

The framing elements of the artwork indicate lines of division between spaces. The spaces themselves are in the shapes of rectangles, squares, and crescents; the central shape repeats the outer frame. The crescent, star, and sun motifs are repeated throughout the composition. Spaces contain three-dimensional feathers and skeletons, a hand, a large eye, and a small three-dimensional lion and mask. The fiber is organic, in contrast to the solid form of the frame. Textures vary among the wooden frame and central picture; the paper collage of the moon, sun, and stars; the plastic lion, mask, and skeletons, and the feathers, fiber, seeds, and beads.

Formal Organization

How do the elements in the artwork work together? (For example, are parts repeated, balanced, emphasized, contrasted?)

Nine Mojo Secrets is symmetrical and contains many repeated elements in the wooden frame. Spaces are arranged around the central picture of the Luba ceremony. Objects within the composition are also repeated, such as the symbols of the moon, stars, and sun. A small three-dimensional white mask is a part of one of the spaces, while the hanging fetish itself, with its wooden frame and fiber skirt, resembles an African Masquerader (a person whose face and body are covered with a ceremonial costume, including a head mask). The artwork has several highly contrasting areas: the mystic eye against the dark hand, the stars on either side of the crescent moon, the bright suns in the lines of moons and stars, and the small radiating sun in the space with the lion and mask.

Reproduction

How is the reproduction (digitized or printed image) different from the original artwork? (size, angle of view, surface texture, etc.)

The reproduction is a single digitized image, while Nine Mojo Secrets is a collage of pictures and objects set inside a wooden frame that has fiber, seeds, and beads hanging from it. The reproduction is smooth and flat; the original contains the various textures of its many elements and is a three-dimensional low relief that projects almost two inches from the wall.

Contextual Information

What can I find out about when and where the artwork was made?

Natural Context

What is the natural environment like where the artwork was made? (for example, climate, landforms, natural resources)

The artwork was made in Southern California, which is characterized by wide, blue skies, a mild climate, and bright sunlight. Pasadena, where the artist lives, is hilly and sits against the San Gabriel mountains.

Functional Context

How is/was the artwork used?

The artwork acts as a place similar to an altar, where the artist, as medium, contacts the spirits of ancestors for the benefit of the community. Its symmetry and rhythmic pattern indicate the harmony created by ritual between the spiritual and physical worlds. Viewers are asked to participate in the ritual, using it to ward off negative forces; to call for spiritual wisdom, guidance, and protection; and to reconnect with the rejuvenating force of the essential energy of existence.

Cultural Context

What can I determine about what people thought, believed, or did in the culture in which the artwork was made?

In 1926, when Betye Saar was born, much of California was segregated. In Pasadena, where she grew up, African Americans were excluded from parks and restaurants, saw movies from segregated balconies, and swam in the municipal pool on Tuesdays only. The city of Los Angeles restricted where African Americans could live, forcing them to reside in segregated neighborhoods. In the 1930s many Blacks lived in the Central Avenue district. The huge influx of Southern migrants that began in 1942 meant that African Americans were overcrowded in the areas of Watts, Central Avenue, and West Adams. Because the neighboring White communities stiffened their resistance to the newcomers, Watts increasingly became an isolated ghetto, leading to great despair among its residents.

In the 1940s Los Angeles was a segregated multiracial metropolis. Central Avenue was African American, East Los Angeles was Chicano, and Little Tokyo was Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino. World War II brought these people together in the shipyards and aircraft factories, diminishing the walls of distrust. Young African Americans and Chicanos crossed cultural boundaries, borrowing music and fashion and exchanging customs in sports, slang, festivals, car customizing, and graffiti writing. New styles of music, known as bebop and cool jazz, also attracted middle-class White Angelenos to the nightclubs on Central Avenue.

While Black Angelenos faced housing and job discrimination and police brutality, instances of racial injustice also affected other nonwhite communities in Los Angeles. African Americans spoke out against the anti-Chicano violence during the Zoot Suit riots in 1943. During World War II, African Americans, faced with housing shortages, moved into evacuated Japanese communities; however, following the Japanese interment, African American, Filipino, and Korean leaders worked together to ease the return of the evacuees.

While the nation focused on the flagrant violation of human rights in the South during the 1950s, Watts was steadily declining into a slum, hemmed in by prejudice and poverty. During the summer of 1965, racial violence erupted there following an incident of police brutality and spread to the South Central area. One of the largest African

American civil uprisings in the nation's history, it not only symbolized the anger and alienation of millions of African Americans who were segregated in urban areas across the country but also warned of future violence.

Less than a year after the Watts uprising, the cry "Black Power" was first heard in a Canton, Mississippi, speech by Stokeley Carmichael of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). To the young people who had formed the Black Panther Party and those who had tried to gain a voice in their government by registering to vote in Mississippi, the extent of White violence was disillusioning and served to turn the philosophy of the Civil Rights movement from nonviolent direct action to self-defense. White Americans focused on the frightening image of African Americans with guns, but as President Johnson later reflected, "Black power had a different meaning to the Black man, who until recently has had to seek the White world's approval, and for whom success had come largely on White people's terms. To such a man, Black power meant a great deal more in areas that mattered the most—dignity, pride, and self-awareness" (Johnson, 1971, p. 39).

Black Power meant as much to African Americans in Los Angeles, where people had been lured by the promise of opportunity and a more open society, as they did to African Americans living in the closed societies of the South. It was the California communities that produced the organizations that articulated the demands and aspirations of Black Power. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party based on the ideology of revolutionary nationalism, and Ron Karenga founded United Slaves (US), extolling cultural nationalism. Both groups denounced the goal of integration, feeling that African Americans should control their own communities. Karenga, the most prominent Black nationalist in Los Angeles, organized the Sons of Watts by recruiting gang members and formed patrols to monitor police activity in African American neighborhoods. Between 1967 and 1969, the Panthers confronted police in clashes across the country that left ten Panthers and nine officers dead. Both the Panthers and US encouraged the rise of Black and ethnic studies programs on college and university campuses. By 1970, Karenga, Seale, and Newton were either in exile or incarcerated. Neither group had significant middle-class support, and without leadership, the Black Power movement declined. It had effectively pointed out the growing pessimism among urban African Americans, however.

As with SNCC and other civil rights organizations, the nationalists did not successfully address the problem of gender equality, the double discrimination of being Black and a woman. Influenced by the civil rights movement, the National Organization for Women (NOW) demanded legislation that would outlaw discrimination against women. By the 1970s the women's liberation movement had gathered mass support. Racial issues weakened it, however. Many African American women considered the movement to be mainly middle-class White women who wanted the right to have fulfilling occupations outside the home, while many women of color were already working outside the home, often at the most menial of jobs. Additionally, many African American women felt that fighting for women's liberation would undermine the common struggle of Black women

and men for African American liberation.

Artworld Context

What can I learn about the art ideas, beliefs, and activities that were important in the culture in which the artwork was made?

In the late 1960s, cultural nationalism inspired an outpouring of art, music, and literature known as the Black Arts movement. Just as Black nationalists rejected the goal of integration into White society, many African American visual artists rejected integration into the art world and its "art for art's sake" aesthetic. Instead, they advocated art that ordinary people could understand and that could be seen in public spaces. For Ron Karenga, art was seen wholly in revolutionary terms:

> The battle we are waging now is the battle for the minds of Black people, and if we lose this battle we cannot win the violent one. It becomes very important then, that art plays the role it should play in Black survival and not bog itself down in the meaningless madness of the Western world wasted. In order to avoid this madness, Black artists... must accept the fact that what is needed is an aesthetic, a Black aesthetic, that is a criterion for judging the validity and/or the beauty of a work of art. (Karenga, 1971, p. 32)

Inspired by African art, a group of artists known as the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (AfriCobra) developed a philosophy that the function of art was to develop a national Black consciousness based on family unity, the celebration of heroes, and African American heritage. These artists strove to invest their work with the distinctive styles, rhythms, and colors of the ghetto in order to speak directly to their audience. The artists William Walker and Jeff Donaldson, for example, brought art to ghetto residents by painting street murals.

Between 1966 and 1973 there were thirty major exhibits of African American art, and the Studio Museum in Harlem and the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Boston were established. However, by the mid-1970s, when the pressure of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements had ended, exhibitions of work by African American artists virtually disappeared.

When African American artists were struggling for inclusion at New York's Museum of Modern Art, the artist Faith Ringgold became involved in the protest. She was also involved in the newly emerging movement of women who were protesting their exclusion from museums, exhibitions, and art history scholarship. Ringgold and her daughter, Michele Wallace, founded Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL) and fought for the inclusion of African American women artists in

the Venice Biennale. As a result of the women's group Ad Hoc and the work of such women as the art critic Lucy Lippard and Faith Ringgold, Betye Saar and Barbara Chase Riboud were the first African American women to be included in the Whitney Annual in 1971.

"Why Have There Been No GREAT Women Artists?" (1971) Linda Nochlin's landmark article, introduced feminist scholarship on women in the arts. She stressed the idea that art occurs in a social situation and is determined by social institutions, namely the artworld, which has historically excluded women from art training, the work of women from museum collections, and the knowledge of women artists from art history. Additionally, the circumstances of most women's lives as mothers, household workers, and caregivers and the social belief in the genetic inferiority of women have limited their educational and artistic opportunities. Women in the United States, however, have produced art within the parameters of household labor and textile and clothing production. Until the Women's movement, the cultural expression of women who worked with fabric had been labeled craft and considered merely decoration. During the 1970s, Saar was among those artists who challenged the direction of aesthetic dialogue by returning to women's textile traditions. Her fabric collage Tangled Roots explores the "one-drop" rule, a Louisiana law that considered anyone with one drop of African blood to be Black. Her Handkerchief Collages are personal stories of beloved family members.

During the 1980s, feminist scholarship on women in the arts turned the artworld toward a self-conscious examination of past cultural traditions, styles, trends, and practices. At the height of the Black Arts movement the African American art community began to gradually shift away from social themes, modernist styles, and large, historic works of art. Los Angeles artists such as Saar, David Hammons, and John Outterbridge, influenced by African sculpture, folk art, Latino altars, and California Funk, began experimenting with recycled images and accumulated materials. Rather than using painted or sculpted figures to represent African American people, these artists often create symbols of spirituality and remembrance. Their work, instead of breaking away from African American art traditions, turns back to it.

Viewpoints for Interpretation

What can I find out about what the artwork meant to people when and where it was made and what it means to people now?

Art Maker

Why did the art maker want the artwork to look the way it does?

Betye Saar has said that

> all the information that comes from other cultures and other periods of time still comes down to the fact that we all have to exist on this planet as one person...as one spirit...that spiritual quality that moves around and some people pick it up, take it and run, and some people don't understand it or are afraid of it. What I try to do is make it feel comfortable, I don't try to do threatening things because I'm not about imitating African art or primitive art, but I am interested in the power it has and that power being transferred to the work that I do. And by power, I mean some kind of communication between me and my materials on one level and then the final product communicating with the viewer. (Wright, 1989, p. 58)

Artworld Viewer

How did the person(s) for whom the artwork was made (for example, a patron, user, or other viewer of the time) understand it?

According to the African American art historian Samella Lewis,

> Saar's Nine Mojo Secrets, which includes references to astrology and religion, is said by the artist to be a result of her concern with the mysteries of life, embodied in "the secrets of Africa, Oceania; the limbo of before birth and after death." The work's astrological symbols—moons and stars—combined with the mystic eye and other symbols of the cosmos form a rhythmic pattern enframed by the edges of the windowpanes. The central section of the work reveals a photographic depiction of Africans in ceremony. Below the window frame is a "skirt" made of fibers, seeds, and beads. The solid form of the window and the fibrous skirt create a combination that resembles a ceremonial mask. (Lewis, 1978, p. 201)

The art critic Lucy Lippard has said that Saar developed "a new symbolism that incorporates psychic discoveries and private histories as microcosms for African American history, tracing at the same time the threads that run through the world's non-Western cultures" (Lippard, 1990, p. 14).

Cultural Understanding

How was the artwork understood within the culture in which it was made?

Saar has created an object with many layers of meaning. The window frame is a

symbol of transition between levels of consciousness; the objects in each box have implications that are mythical, multicultural, historical, autobiographical, and political. The word mojo in African American blues and folklore refers to a fetish, or the releasing of spirits who act as guides and healers to benefit a person or community and to protect against negative forces. Saar has compared her art to the blues, referring to it as a way to deal with the pain of being Black.

The shape of the window, with its central space surrounded by smaller sections, is reminiscent of a stained glass window in a Christian church. The nine boxes contain shapes that have spiritual significance: the crescent moon represents feminine energy; the sun, masculine energy; the lion, protective power and wisdom; the feathers, essential energy of existence; and the skeletons, death and the passage into a spiritual life. The ancient ritual of the Luba, who contact their beloved ancestors to provide guidance through life, represents the ritual power of the artwork itself. The small mask may refer to the psychological barrier created by the social construct of race in the United States. The artwork, with its fibrous skirt, resembles an African masquerader, whose costume covers his form so as to invite the spirits to contact their living descendants through his body in order to bestow on them both wisdom and protection.

In 1971, at a time of great pessimism among many African Americans, Nine Mojo Secrets would have been understood as an object of protection and healing—of Black power—the protection of African American people suffering from White violence and the healing of the pain of being Black in a racist society.

Other Viewpoints

Are there other people's viewpoints you want to consider? If so, whose?

Many children who live in ghetto communities are confronted with violence in their daily lives. Some of them will become part of the increasing number of suicides and substance abusers in the United States. This artwork may help these young people reflect on their own strength and spirituality and cope with the pain in their lives.

Connections among Artworks

What can I find out about connections between this artwork and other artworks?

Style

How does this artwork look like other artworks?

In many ways Saar's work has anticipated postmodern developments in art. The recycling of objects, multiple layers of meaning, and incorporation of folk and ethnic

traditions are meant to contribute to healing rather than to question social assumptions and institutions, however.

Influence

How did earlier artworks influence this artwork? How did/might it influence later artworks?

Nine Mojo Secrets has been influenced by the cultural makeup of Southern California. The Pacific Rim sensibility, Saar feels, gives her art "the quality of light, more influenced by Asia" (Reed, 1990, p. 39). The folk artist Simon Rodia's architectural monument influenced her use of found objects. Ritual items and altars from cultures that are close to nature—African, Oceanic, Native American, and pre-Renaissance European—and the hybrid cultures of the Caribbean, Latin America, Mexico, and Black America have influenced the artwork's connection to spiritual power. The boxes of the surrealist artist Joseph Cornell helped Saar discover a way of assembling the objects she collected.

However, rather than being a surrealistic juxtaposition of unlike and irrational elements, Saar's boxes reflect her thoughts about the accumulation of objects for power and display in Africa. There, the community constructs ritual items from collected objects that reflect years of tradition and accumulated wisdom in order to foster social cohesion and community stability. Saar collects materials from the natural environment and from multiple ethnic and racial groups, selecting these things for the power of past lives, and transforming them into ritual objects.

Themes

What general ideas help connect this artwork to other artworks?

The theme of Nine Mojo Secrets is spirituality and a harmonious connection to the universe through the process of ritual. For many centuries humans have used pictures and objects in rituals that have connected people to the spiritual energy of a higher power.

- It is believed that the hunters who painted on the walls of European caves at Lascaux (c. 15000 B.C.) and Altamira (c. 13000 B.C.), the Africans who decorated the rock outcroppings in Tassili N'Ajjer in the Sahara (c. 7000 B.C.), and the Chumash and Anasazi who inscribed rocks in the southwestern United States (c. 1200 A.D. to the present) used their markings in ritual ceremonies that connected the natural and spiritual worlds. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/chumash.html

- The Hawaiian necklace Lei Niho Palaoa (nineteenth century) has an ivory pendant that is thought to contain great mana (spiritual power or force).

http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/O/lei.html

- Pong Kachina, Aha Kachina, and Hilili Kachina (1917-34) are powerful ancestor spirits of the Hopi that represent the essence of life and nature. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/O/kachina.html

- The Native Americans who practiced the Ghost Dance religion believed that the spirits of their ancestors would come back and return the world to its former harmony. The figures rendered with line by Kicking Bear (Mato Wanartaka) in the Battle of Little Big Horn (c. 1898) represent the departing spirits of the Sioux who had died in the conflict. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/kicking.html

- Dogon carvings of people with outstretched arms and bent knees symbolize a powerful spiritual energy. John Biggers has used these symbols in his painting The Upper Room (1984) to illustrate a belief in humanity's ascension to a higher spiritual place. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/DP/upper.html

- Michael Cummings has portrayed humans as spiritual beings that bridge the world of heaven and earth in the quilt Springtime in Memphis: At Night, 1979 (1979). http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/T/spring.html

- John Outterbridge has placed a fetish doll in a chrome sports car in the assemblage Ethnic Heritage Series: California Crosswalk (1979) to indicate spiritual power and protection against evil forces. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/ethnic.html

Saar has placed her Nine Mojo Secrets within a wooden frame that signifies an altar that helps humans see beyond the material world in which they live. The altar theme also connects this artwork to others. In the Indian sculpture A Buddhist Altarpiece (c. 800) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/altar.html], the goddess Chunda is an object of contemplation and devotion. In Saint Anthony of Padua (late eighteenth century) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/ anthony.html], a representation of the Catholic saint who was considered the finder of lost animals was carved in wood and painted as part of a retablo on the altar of a Spanish colonial mission church in New Mexico.

Another theme of Saar's piece is power. Unlike The Liberation of Aunt Jemima (1972) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/jemima.html], however, where Saar used a Black fist to symbolize the demand for the political, economic, and cultural power that has been denied African Americans, the power in Nine Mojo Secrets comes from a spiritual source, an African ritual, and brings harmony to humanity. In Eagle in a Snowstorm (1848) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet /Images/P/eagle.html], Katsushika Hokusai has drawn an eagle as a symbol of power, defiant in its struggle against the natural elements (a reference to the artist's struggle against old age). The

elephant, by virtue of its towering size, unstoppable strength, and trumpeting cry,became an enduring symbol of power in ancient India. Elephant with Riders (third-second centuries B.C.) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/elephant.html] indicates the power of the elephant and the authority of its riders. David Hammons' The Door (1969) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/door.html] shows the shape of a human figure printed on an admissions door, implying the power of privilege that some members of society hold over others. In Hope Street: Church Mothers (1984) [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/hope.html], Marie Johnson-Calloway has portrayed women who are the community of power behind the preacher's pulpit.

African American Art

A Los Angeles Legacy

Key Artwork: General Moses (Harriet Tubman)

http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/African/White/index.html

Charles White
(1918-79)
General Moses (Harriet Tubman)
1965
Drawing; Chinese ink and wash
Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, Los Angeles

In this black-and-white drawing, Charles White depicts Harriet Tubman, the woman who led hundreds of African American slaves to freedom. White portrayed heroic African Americans to promote racial pride and present the history that was missing from textbooks. He also became interested in picturing the courageous struggles of ordinary African American people. White created drawings that could be easily reproduced and, despite pressure during the 1950s, continued to present social issues in a realist style. He wanted his work to be both affordable and accessible. White lived and worked in the Los Angeles area for many years.

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Key Artwork: General Moses (Harriet Tubman)

Information about the Art Maker or Artwork

What can I find out about the art maker or artwork?

Art Maker

Who made the artwork? What are the circumstances of the art maker's life?

The daughter of a former slave, Charles White's mother left Mississippi, where she worked as a domestic, for Chicago when she was just sixteen years old. It was there that Charles was born on April 2, 1918. Discussing how he became interested in art, White recalled that at an early age he discovered that he could draw, and his mother gave him a paint set when he was seven years old. He did not know how to use the paints, but coming home from school one day he discovered students from the Art Institute of Chicago painting in a nearby park. Using a window shade as a canvas, White imitated their use of paint, and although his mother punished him, she kept that painting all of her life.

There were few African American children in White's school, and no African American teachers, so he grew up feeling self-conscious. White related that it was not until he was fourteen that he discovered African Americans had a history. A voracious reader, he often spent his days in the library. He also studied paintings and drawings at the Art Institute. White began his formal art training when he was fifteen, at the South Side Settlement House. He also met a group of intellectuals, including Richard Wright. White later won a scholarship to the Art Institute, which allowed him to qualify for employment with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) art program. He also learned about the Mexican muralists and the Marxist concept of art as a political instrument.

In 1940 White's drawing There Were No Crops This Year won first prize at the Negro Exposition in Chicago, where he met the sculptor Elizabeth Catlett. The following year they married and moved to New Orleans, where Catlett was the head of the art department at Dillard University. It was in Louisiana that they learned about African American life in the South, about the segregation that defined all areas of society, including universities and the art museum.

In 1943 White was asked to create a mural for Hampton University in Virginia and to teach in the art department, which had recently been initiated there by the Jewish psychologist Viktor Lowenfeld. Lowenfeld, a refugee from Nazi Europe, had a profound understanding of racism and the personal feelings of inadequacy, inner rage, and fear that accompany it. John Biggers, a student of Lowenfeld's, was influenced by White's style and helped with his mural The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy.

In the 1940s White and Catlett studied at the graphic workshop Taller de Grafica Popular in Mexico. There they were influenced by Mexican artists who were working to create an art about and for their people. When White's marriage to Catlett ended, he moved back to New York, where the focus of his work shifted from leaders of the past to the lives of ordinary African American men and women. In 1951 he exhibited in a large show devoted to the recognition of African American women; the same year the Whitney Museum of American Art purchased a piece called Preacher. When White and his second wife moved to California, his Freedom Now [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/freedom.html] and I Have a Dream, exhibited at Occidental College and the Heritage Gallery in Los Angeles, were influenced by the growing movement for civil rights. The works portray courageous people surmounting difficulties with strength and dignity. In spite of the abstract direction taken by the artworld, White maintained the viewpoint of the socially conscious artist of the 1930s, using an emotionally expressive style. Late in the 1960s he came across some pre-Civil War posters identifying runaway slaves and was inspired to use them as backgrounds for portraits of contemporary African Americans.

When White died in 1979, he had had more than fifty one-man exhibits and was the second African American artist to be elected a full member of the National Academy of Design. Today his work is found in forty-nine museums. Additionally, he influenced the artistic training of many African American artists, such as John Biggers, David Hammons, Richard Wyatt, and John Wilson. Today, Charles White's memory is honored in the Los Angeles area with a display in the Castle Green apartments in Pasadena, where he had a studio, and by a park named for him in Altadena.

Subject Matter

What subject matter (people, places, or things) does the artwork depict, if anything?

An African American woman is shown resting in front of a large rock with her feet on the grass. The rock takes up most of the picture, but the artist has left white space around the central image. The woman is Harriet Tubman (born c. 1820-1913), referred to as the "Moses" of her people, who personally escorted more than three hundred slaves to freedom in nineteen escapes. The large stone symbolizes her physical and moral strength. The following account by Martha C. Wright reveals the dangers of the Underground Railroad for people who would have been tortured and perhaps killed for their attempts to attain freedom:

> Auburn, Dec. 30, 1860...We have been expending our sympathies, as well as congratulations, on seven newly arrived slaves that Harriet Tubman has just pioneered safely from the Southern Part of Maryland. One women carried a baby all the way and bro't two other chld'n that Harriet and

> the men helped along. They bro't a piece of old comfort and a blanket, in a basket with a little kindling, a little bread for the baby with some laudanum to keep it from crying during the day. They walked all night carrying the little ones, and spread the old comfort on the frozen ground, in some dense thicket where they all hid, while Harriet went out foraging, and sometimes cd not get back till dark, fearing she wd be followed. Then, if they had crept further in, and she couldn't find them, she wd whistle, or sing certain hymns and they wd answer. (Lerner, 1972, pp. 64-65)

Technical Features

How was the artwork made? (tools, materials, and processes)

White never used models, instead working from memory, so his figures are compositions of people he had seen or known. With the visual form in mind, he would begin with detailed studies of the hands, eyes, nose, mouth, and gestures, making changes as he developed each person's character. In these preliminary drawings, White worked out the three-dimensional form of his figures. Sometimes the final piece was done in charcoal; General Moses is an ink drawing on illustration board. Working in this medium, White would make a tracing, no more than a suggested line, with refined details carefully worked out. Using brushes, he would first apply a gray wash. Then he used traditional Chinese ink for the drawing, grinding the ink on a slab and employing a pen and brushes as well as dry color, poster paint, charcoal, and sandpaper in the process. Chinese ink, one of the oldest and most permanent art materials available, can be used dry or diluted with water. By choosing it as his medium, White portrays the strength of Harriet Tubman with a durable material.

Sensory Elements

What visual elements do I see in the artwork? (line, color, shape, light and dark, texture, mass, and space)

The pictorial space is almost filled with the large rock; the figure of Harriet Tubman almost seems to be a part of the stone. The contrast of black and white gives the figure a three-dimensional quality and dramatizes the image. Line gives a rough surface texture to the rock and defines the smooth contours of Tubman's face and the fabrics of her blouse and skirt. The negative space surrounding the rock has been left as a white area.

Formal Organization

How do the elements in the artwork work together? (For example, are parts

repeated, balanced, emphasized, contrasted?)

Harriet Tubman is seated in the center of the composition, her large, bare feet planted on the earth beneath her. The rock behind her is divided horizontally and symbolizes the physical and moral strength of the determined woman, who faced violence and death in order to relieve the suffering of others. The composition is basically symmetrical and has a formal balance that contributes to the feeling of stability and connection to the earth. The black-and-white contrast contributes to the sober emotional mood.

Reproduction

How is the reproduction (digitized or printed image) different from the original artwork? (size, angle of view, surface texture, etc.)

General Moses is a black-and-white drawing in Chinese ink and wash. Because the artist wanted to make his works available to many people who otherwise would have been unable to purchase art, he used a medium that could be easily reproduced. The drawing is done on two pieces of illustration board, making it much larger than the digitized reproduction.

Condition

What condition (broken, restored, dirty) is the artwork in? How did it look when it was new?

By using high-grade Chinese ink and illustration board, White's drawings have retained their technical quality for many years.

Contextual Information

What can I find out about when and where the artwork was made?

Functional Context

How is/was the artwork used?

General Moses illustrates a strong, brave woman who struggled against slavery. White always included Tubman in his murals of African American heroes (she is portrayed in The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy along with Shango (the Yoruba thunder god), Leadbelly (blues musician Huddie William Ledbetter), John Henry (built the railroad), Crispus Attucks (died at the Massacre at Bunker Hill), Nat Turner (planned a slave rebellion in 1831), Booker T. Washington (educator), George Washington

Carver (scientist), and Paul Robeson (actor). White tried to capture the beauty and spirit of African American people and to give them a sense of their history and a pride in their identity.

Cultural Context

What can I determine about what people thought, believed, or did in the culture in which the artwork was made?

The stock market crash in October 1929, when Charles White was eleven years old, ushered in the Great Depression, a time of change in the way people in the United States viewed their government. For people of color, survival had always been a struggle, but now many White Americans also began to question the probability of individual economic success. All Americans began to rely on social welfare programs. The New Deal of the Roosevelt administration marked a turning point in race relations in the United States. For the first time, due to the large numbers of African Americans in segregated, northern, urban ghettos, the Black vote had some impact on the federal government.

In the North and West the New Deal supplied material benefits to the unemployed and created a climate of optimism. In the South, however, African Americans encountered discrimination in federal programs. In addition, because the Agricultural Adjustment Administration aided large planters, who then needed fewer workers, sharecroppers were forced off the land and into cities, where restrictive covenants confined them to ghettos and employment opportunities were limited due to discrimination on the part of both unions and management.

With the entry of the United States into World War II in 1941, however, the lack of cheap immigrant labor and the need for wartime industrial production gave the economy a boost. Many African Americans sought employment and better living conditions by moving to large cities in the North and West. There were not many immediate effects on the social or legal status of African Americans in the South though. By 1945, White supremacy had become a global issue when the world was shocked by the extent of the moral depravity of the "civilized and Christian" German nation. During the Cold War, Communist countries held U.S. pretensions to democracy up to ridicule and international pressure influenced public policy. The Communist witch-hunts of Senator Joseph McCarthy, however, resulted in national paranoia as well as the silencing of many African American intellectuals and artists.

In 1950 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) mounted an all-out attack on segregated education. A string of successful cases culminated in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling, which overturned the separate but equal doctrine. Although this decision generated hope for African Americans, the Supreme Court did not set firm deadlines for compliance. The violent

reaction of White Southerners created a division in national opinion, and the gap between African American expectations and the slow pace of actual change gave rise to a grassroots militancy in demands for civil rights. When Rosa Parks was arrested on December 1, 1955, for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a White man, African American women organized a one-day boycott of the city buses. The boycott was to last over a year and catapult the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., into a leadership role in a national movement. Young African Americans were inspired by the revolutions against colonialism in Asia and Africa; other young Americans of diverse backgrounds began to demand that their country live up to the values they had been taught to believe in.

Artworld Context

What can I learn about the art ideas, beliefs, and activities that were important in the culture in which the artwork was made?

During the Great Depression, the WPA provided greater freedom and opportunity than had been possible before for African American artists. In 1935 the Federal Arts Project (FAP) hired artists at various stages of development, thereby providing the opportunity for African Americans to work on their art full time so they could develop their skills. Many artists found work as teachers in the art centers that were established in communities around the country to provide free art lessons to interested persons. Some African American artists worked with the printmaking process, others decorated buildings for the Mural Project or worked as easel artists.

The American public developed new attitudes toward art because of the federal projects. A spirit of regional pride grew because artists were able to gain experience in their own communities instead of leaving for Paris, New York, or Chicago. Interest in regional expression also inspired a new appreciation for American crafts. Art became part of the lives of people through education and recreation and was a topic of public discourse. Most important for African American artists, they were no longer outsiders but participants in the discussion of aesthetic concerns. They were influenced by artists who drew on American life as part of the Regionalist and Social Realist movements and by the Mexican muralists, some of whom were working and lecturing in the United States. This freedom of expression allowed African American artists to portray the reality of the life they understood from their unique perspective.

The aesthetic values of American artists during the Depression related to the social and economic concerns of the period. Artists of the Social Realist movement were particularly concerned with social injustice and labor unions as well as with Nazi aggression and the growing threat of war. African American artists were concerned with discrimination in jobs, housing, education, labor relations, and even federal relief programs. A fundamental question of the time was whether art should have political and social meaning. Many American artists felt that they should be free to express what they

considered important and that art should contribute to changing social attitudes. The Mexican muralists used art and cultural heritage for social revolution. Communists viewed art as a weapon for propaganda and sponsored depictions of the worker as a hero. In Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R. artists who did not support the approved doctrine of propaganda and realist styles were silenced.

In 1938 the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) began attacking the WPA art projects as centers of Communism. It was this attack on art that helped destroy the WPA, a major employer of African Americans. By 1941 the United States was involved in the war to stop the spread of Fascism, and it was considered unpatriotic to paint pictures of social criticism. After the war, artistic styles changed, partly due to the influence of European abstract artists, who had fled Nazi Europe for America because Hitler considered abstract art the work of degenerates. With the Cold War, the control of ideas and cultural production in the United States reflected a fear of Communism and socialism; many galleries would no longer accept works with social content. There was also, however, a real interest in experimenting with nonrepresentational imagery.

As they turned away from interpreting their social world, many artists developed art that reflected psychological concerns. The African American artist Norman Lewis, for example, whose paintings had dealt with social problems during the Depression, began to feel that art could not change attitudes or social conditions, so he became a leader in the Abstract Expressionist movement. In a climate where artists were concerned that their work would be considered irrelevant because it was outside the abstract art scene, it was difficult for artists who were devoted to social realism—like Charles White—to survive.

Viewpoints for Interpretation

What can I find out about what the artwork meant to people when and where it was made and what it means to people now?

Art Maker

Why did the art maker want the artwork to look the way it does?

In spite of the pressure to change his traditional figurative style of art, Charles White continued to focus on social themes and humanistic values and to believe that artists could mold attitudes. He felt that he had painted only one picture, a picture of his people, and his works were different fragments of a coherent philosophy expressing their spirit: "This is the way I feel about my people: they're bigger than life...such spirit is there! This is what I pursue in every picture I try to do" (White, n.d.). Regarding this image, White relates,

> I always wanted to make some comment about Black heroes and heroines that had inspired me, particularly Harriet Tubman. When I first read about her... What a woman! What a magnificent person! It was so contradictory to the whole way I had been educated...This woman couldn't read or write...The education of life—life had propelled her into a situation which she was able to give leadership and be a dominant part of the whole abolitionist movement, responsible for hundreds of slaves escaping through the underground railroad system. This woman was a key person to the whole struggle against slavery. So when I wanted to do a mural I always included her.That's why it was so magnificent to do a drawing related to her. I've only captured one piece of her. I could do ten thousand pictures and never capture all the facets of this person. (White, n.d.)

Artworld Viewer

How did the person(s) for whom the artwork was made (for example, a patron, user, or other viewer of the time) understand it?

Although he won many national awards, with the advent of Abstract Expressionism White was largely ignored by leading art critics because of his traditional style and his continued concentration on African American working people. However, his 1960s portraits expressed the heroic efforts of the Civil Rights movement in a way that ordinary people could understand.

Earlier in the twentieth century, such African American leaders and intellectuals as W.E.B. Du Bois encouraged artists to bolster racial pride. According to David Driskell, this attitude fostered "the notion that a 'good' work of art is differentiated from a 'bad' work of art essentially by its subject matter and its imitation of a 'reallife' model." However, Driskell believed that

> even within the academic, realist tradition the genius of an artist can elevate him above the literal. To this end, the art of Charles White has captured the beauty of Blackness as seen in the expressions and daily activities of his people. More than any other academic artist, he has searched the souls of Black folk, registering in his supremely successful realism the unique qualities he has found. He overcomes the problem of using his art literally to mirror social injustices by portraying people whose joys are experienced even in periods of suffering. No one needs the revelation of a secret code to understand Charles White's art even though he uses

> Black content in his work. He reveals those fundamentals of truth known by all who believe man to be "the measure of all things." (Driskell, 1976, p. 78)

General Moses is part of a collection of African American art in South Central Los Angeles, in the African American-owned Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. The collection began when the murals of Hale Woodruff and Charles Alston were installed in the office lobby in 1949. The building was conceived as a showcase for the work of African American artists. Golden State has served as more than a repository for an art collection, however. The artist Richard Wyatt recalled that the company sponsored art classes, taught by Charles White, for underprivileged students. The artist William Pajaud, the curator for Golden State, studied at Xavier University in New Orleans and the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. In addition to his work as a collector of art, he has had one-man shows at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Crocker Gallery in Sacramento, and the De Young Museum in San Francisco.

Harriet (1972), another portrait by White, is at the Heritage Gallery in Los Angeles, which has many of White's artworks as well as his private papers and books. Benjamin Horowitz, director of the Heritage Gallery, was a longtime friend of White and contributed to the book Images of Dignity: The Drawings of Charles White (1967). The gallery functions as an important resource in preserving the legacy of this influential African American artist.

The singer Harry Belafonte and the actor Sidney Poitier have also been admirers and collectors of White's work. Belafonte also contributed to Images of Dignity and wrote several articles about White.

Cultural Understanding

How was the artwork understood within the culture in which it was made?

African American art is often a powerful form of resistance, whether or not it has a message of protest. White's work expresses the everyday struggles that are part of African American survival. White himself was severely beaten for entering a New Orleans restaurant and was forced at gunpoint to the rear of a streetcar in Hampton, Virginia. Over a period of fifteen years he learned of the lynchings of three of his uncles and two of his cousins. These incidents may have inspired the work O, Mary, Don't You Weep, in which two African American women comfort each other in their grief. The title of General Moses indicates the strength of African American women as well as the inspiration that African Americans have drawn from biblical struggles against injustice.

Other Viewpoints

Are there other people's viewpoints you want to consider? If so, whose?

Among the various groups whose viewpoints on General Moses might be enriching are those of recent immigrants, who may have special insights into being propelled into a situation that calls for physical and moral strength in the face of adversity and oppression. They perhaps could draw inspiration from a spiritual connection with Harriet Tubman.

Connections among Artworks

What can I find out about connections between this artwork and other artworks?

Style

How does this artwork look like other artworks?

This is a carefully drawn solid figure, done in the realistic style of Charles White. However, the emotional impact of the dark lines, the deep concentration of the woman, and the white background indicate that it does not depict reality in an ordinary sense.

Influence

How did earlier artworks influence this artwork? How did/might it influence later artworks?

White's style was influenced by the social realist movement of the 1930s and the Mexican muralist traditions of the Mexican Revolution. He was also inspired to develop his ideas about art by teachers such as George E. Neal, Mitchell Sporin, Henry Sternberg, Viktor Lowenfeld, Leopold Mendez, Diego Rivera, and David Siqueiros. White felt that Neal made his students conscious of the beauty of Black people. Sternberg's influence changed White's style from symbolic and stylized to one that was more individualized. At Hampton, Lowenfeld's efforts to raise students' self-esteem by having them identify with their heritage coincided with White's belief in art as a means of communicating African American history. Studying with Mexican artists, White was influenced to create art for his people.

John Biggers relates that for a number of years he turned out "little Charles Whites." He felt fortunate to have had White as a mentor whom he could emulate: "Many of my colleagues as well as myself have taught Charles White as a major subject to art students through the years. It has been the White story as with our ancestors who always manage to hand down, regardless of the obstacles, the link that bridges a people's destiny" (Biggers, 1980, p. 175).

Themes

What general ideas help connect this artwork to other artworks?

The theme of General Moses is the African American struggle for human rights and dignity. Other African American artists have also addressed this theme. Edmonia Lewis's Forever Free (1867) is a sculptural portrayal of an African American man and woman breaking the chains of slavery. Hale Woodruff's The Mutiny Aboard the Amistad (1939) is a series of murals showing a revolt by Africans who had been enslaved, their trial in New Haven, and their return to Africa. Jacob Lawrence's Migration of the Negro (1940) is a series of panels telling the story of the "Great Migration," when many African Americans left the South, seeking better economic and social conditions. Norman Lewis's Processional (1964) was inspired by the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Harriet Tubman has also been the subject of works by other African American artists, appearing in a linocut by William Smith and in Elizabeth Catlett's linoleum block prints I Helped Hundreds to Freedom (1946), Harriet Tubman (1953), and Harriet (1975).

General Moses represents a strong woman with high moral ideals, a theme that has also been addressed by other artists.

- Beulah Woodard's sculpture Biddy Mason (1950's) is a tribute to an African American woman who walked behind her master's wagon from Mississippi to California and then sued for her freedom.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/biddy.html

- John Biggers's The Upper Room (1984) refers to African American women who support and nurture the home and community.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/DP/upper.html

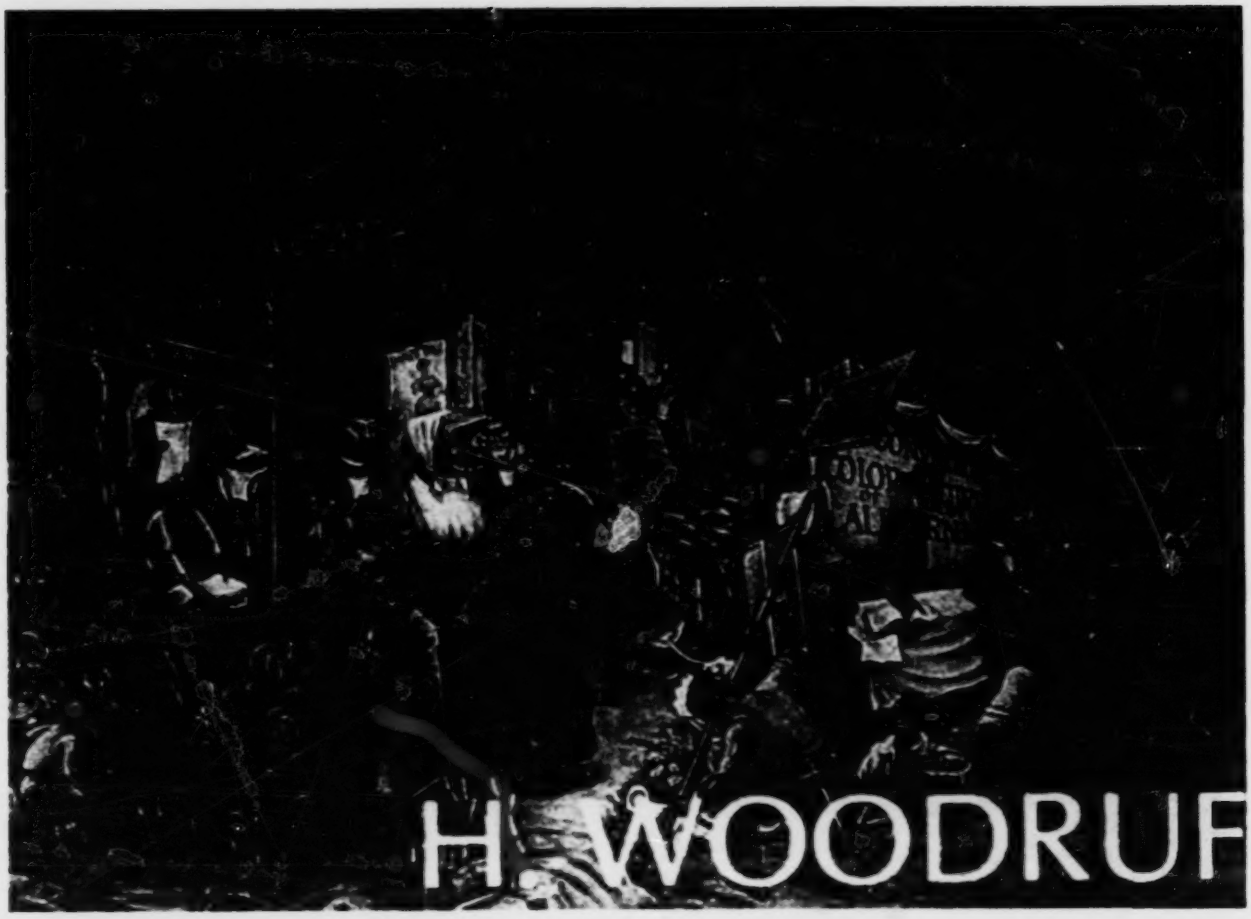
- Lola Alvarez Bravo's photograph De Generación en Generación (c. 1950) shows the strength of a mother and the importance of community support.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/Ph/generacion.html

- Marina Nuñez del Prado's sculpture Madre y Niño (1967) symbolizes the endurance of maternal devotion.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/madre.html

- Marie Johnson-Calloway's Hope Street: Church Mothers (1984) portrays African American women who are the strength of the family, church, and community.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/hope.html

- Frida Kahlo's Self-Portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky (1937) affirms her commitment to the Russian Revolution.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/trotsky.html

- In A Buddhist Altarpiece, the goddess Chunda represents wisdom, the female aspect of the divine.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/altar.html



Key Artwork: The Negro in California History

African American Art
A Los Angeles Legacy

Hale Woodruff
(1900-1980)
1949
Mural; oil on canvas
The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development
197 x 111 in. (approximately 16 1/2 x 9 1/4 feet)
Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, Los Angeles

How many famous African Americans can you name who lived in California before 1900? When the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company built its new building in Los Angeles in 1949, it realized that the history of African Americans in California was not as well known as it should be. It invited nationally known artist Hale Woodruff to paint this mural in its lobby in collaboration with Charles Alston. Woodruff was influenced by African art, European modern art, American Regionalism & Social Realism, and the Mexican murals, especially Diego Rivera. Woodruff's murals can be found in many African American colleges and universities, and his work is in major museums throughout the United States. Today, visitors to Golden State Mutual can see this work in the building's lobby—along with Charles White's General Moses.

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Key Artwork: The Negro in California History

Information about the Art Maker or Artwork

What can I find out about the art maker or artwork?

Art Maker

Who made the artwork? What are the circumstances of the art maker's life?

Hale Woodruff was born in 1900 in Cairo, Illinois. His father died soon after his birth; his mother then moved to Nashville, where she worked as a domestic. As an only child and with his mother spending many hours at work, young Woodruff would often pass the time by copying cartoons from the newspaper and engravings from the family Bible. In high school he drew political cartoons for the school newspaper.

After graduation Woodruff went to Indianapolis, where he developed his draftsmanship skills at the Herron Art School and met African American leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois and John Hope. Woodruff took his paintings to a little gallery run by a German immigrant who gave him the book Afrikanische Plastik (African Sculpture). In it, Woodruff found photographs of the work of African artists. As he later recalled: "Plainly sculptures of Black people, my people, they were considered very beautiful by these German art experts! The whole idea that this could be so was like an explosion. It was a real turning point for me. I was just astonished at this enormous discovery" (Bearden and Henderson, 1993, p. 201).

Woodruff gained recognition as an artist in 1926 when he won the first Harmon Foundation Bronze Award. With this award and the assistance of many people, he sailed for Europe in 1927. In Europe, Woodruff wrote excitedly to the Indianapolis Star about all the different modern art movements that were evident in Paris.

Woodruff became friends with those who made up the "Negro Colony" in Paris, a group of artists and intellectuals that were part of the Negritude movement, a cultural renaissance that was inspired by Africans who were revolting against colonial subjugation. Because of European colonization, African sculpture, Japanese woodcuts, and other forms of visual cultural expression from people outside of Europe were available to artists in Paris during a period when they were looking outside older, academic styles for inspiration. It was African art that inspired African Americans in Paris and helped to shape their identity. Woodruff was influenced by the work of both African and European artists to concentrate on spatial arrangements and geometric patterns in his own work.

In 1931 John Hope invited Woodruff to join the faculty of the newly formed Atlanta

University. In the segregated South during the Great Depression, the style and subject matter of Woodruff's work changed to focus on the facts of poverty, lynching, and segregation. He organized his students into a guild and had them create paintings of the red-clay hills and run-down neighborhoods of the region. When Grant Wood lectured at the High Museum in Atlanta, the institution denied Woodruff admission; however, Wood met with him at Atlanta University. This helped to break down racial barriers, and Woodruff gained permission to bring his students to the museum. When the Harmon Foundation exhibits were discontinued in 1935, Woodruff arranged to hold an annual exhibition at Atlanta University, a tradition that continued until 1970.

Like so many other African American artists during the Depression, Woodruff was attracted to the Mexican muralists, whose work provided a sense of identity and a knowledge of history for impoverished Mexicans. In 1936 he received a fellowship to study art in Mexico with Diego Rivera. Upon returning to Atlanta, Woodruff painted The Amistad Mutiny murals for Talladega College in Alabama. In 1948 he worked with Charles Alston on the murals for the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company in Los Angeles. In 1950 Woodruff painted a series of six murals on The Art of the Negro.

In 1946 Woodruff accepted a teaching position at New York University. Inspired by innovations in the art world, he abandoned his realistic style to take up the symbolic qualities of abstract art that he had explored in his studies in Europe. Rather than emphasizing self-expression, however, Woodruff continued his interest in African art.

When Hale Woodruff died on September 26, 1980, his work was in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Newark Museum, and in the collections of many African American colleges and universities.

Subject Matter

What subject matter (people, places, or things) does the artwork depict, if anything?

The mural depicts various people, places, and things as it describes the history of African Americans in California from 1850 to 1949. Shown are gold miners, whaling ship captain William T. Shorey, workmen on Boulder Dam and the San Francisco Bay Bridge, the Elevator newspaper, African American soldiers, entrepreneur and philanthropist Mary Ellen Pleasant, a Pony Express rider, the Convention of Colored Citizens of California, and the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. Their story is part of the ongoing struggle for equality in California.

The territory of California was a Mexican province until the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in February 1848, completing the dream of Manifest Destiny for the United States. By 1849 gold was discovered near San Francisco, sparking a rush that sent over a hundred thousand people racing west that year. Because of the great distance

and the cost of transportation, few African Americans were among the forty-niners. In addition, many White immigrants to California wanted to prevent African Americans from entering. At the 1849 California Constitutional Convention, delegates decreed that Blacks could not vote or serve in the militia. They were also denied the right to testify in court (and therefore had no means of defending their mining claims) and were not allowed to acquire land under the Homestead Acts. In 1850 there were only 972 free African Americans in California, and although California law prohibited slavery, large numbers of slaves were brought into the state to work in the mines and as house servants.

Slavery in California was undermined by the efforts of abolitionists in the state. The owner of laundries and mining stock, the former slave and businesswoman Mary Ellen Pleasant rode into rural sections of the state to rescue slaves. In 1858 she became famous in San Francisco's African American community when she sheltered the fugitive slave, Archy Lee. Before the end of the Civil War, Pleasant and two other African American women successfully challenged streetcar segregation in San Francisco. It was not until 1893, however, that African Americans were assured access to public transportation in California with the enactment of an antidiscrimination law.

In addition to actively challenging slavery, African Americans in California organized to repeal the laws that restricted them from voting and giving court testimony and denied them equal educational opportunity. San Francisco, which had the oldest urban African American population, built a two-story cultural center and organized an intellectual society, the Atheneum, in 1854. In 1856 African American women organized an association to support the Mirror of the Times, the first African American newspaper west of St. Louis. Its editor, Mifflin Gibbs, a former bootblack who was later to become the first African American judge in United States history, was an active crusader for equality. Negro Conventions were held in California in 1855, 1856, and 1857 to plan courses of action, and the Franchise League was organized in 1862 to campaign for voting rights. In 1862 Phillip Bell and Peter Anderson founded the Pacific Appeal newspaper (Bell left the paper in 1865 to found the more militant Elevator). Due to these efforts, in 1863 the Republican-dominated California legislature repealed the anti-Black provision of the testimony statute and partly removed discriminatory barriers in education. In 1869 African Americans were granted the right to vote in California.

After emancipation in 1863, many of the newly freed slaves in California migrated from the mining centers to several all-Black towns. Approximately 175 African Americans were also living in the city of Los Angeles. These people worked as handymen and domestic servants, although a few had barber shops, restaurants, and grocery stores. In San Francisco, too, economic opportunities for African Americans were limited, and after the Civil War, most of them worked in service jobs or as sailors and dockworkers. In the 1880s, William T. Shorey, the Barbados-born captain of a whaling vessel, along with other African Americans seeking lower housing costs, settled in Oakland rather than San Francisco.

African Americans contributed to the development of the state of California in various ways. Several African American men, among them James Francis, George Monroe, and William Robinson, rode the mail on the Pony Express system throughout California. Monroe, son of an early gold miner, became one of the state's most famous stage drivers; Monroe Meadows in Yosemite is named after him. From 1869 until the Spanish-American War, four units of African American cavalry and infantry, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, stayed in the West guarding settlers and the workmen building the intercontinental railroad from attack by Native Americans (and sometimes guarding Native Americans from attack by White settlers). In 1888 the California Cotton Growers Association brought African Americans from the South to work on farms in Bakersfield. In 1903 the Southern Pacific Railroad brought in nearly two thousand African American laborers, encouraging many of them to migrate from Texas to Los Angeles. Later in the twentieth century, African Americans worked on such dangerous construction projects as the San Francisco Bay Bridge and Boulder Dam.

Between 1910 and 1929 there was a mass exodus out of the South, where most African Americans were tied to the land in a system of peonage known as sharecropping. The military production needed for World War I and the closing off of European immigration caused a shortage of workers, which encouraged African Americans to move to cities in the Northeast. Following the war, as realtors promoted the land in Southern California, more African Americans began to migrate to Los Angeles, where the Black population increased from eight to thirty-eight thousand by 1929.

In spite of the hopes for equality, African American opportunities were limited in Los Angeles by restrictive housing covenants and employment stipulations. The African American section of Los Angeles was shaped in part by the erection of the Dunbar Hotel on Central Avenue in 1912, which accepted African American tenants, causing many White owners to sell or rent. During the 1920s, African Americans also moved into the southern area of Watts, to eastern Los Angeles, and to West Adams. Restrictions on housing were encouraged by court cases enforcing covenants and advocated by many realtors, newspapers, and the Ku Klux Klan, which had a resurgence in California during the 1920s. During a period when social and legal discrimination dominated the national mood, many restaurants, hotels, theaters, and beaches excluded African Americans. Although the African American community lacked the capital to establish many businesses, African American entrepreneurs erected privately owned theaters, automobile dealerships, newspaper offices, and retail businesses along a twelve-block section of Central Avenue. The Dunbar Hospital was built in 1922, the Liberty Building and Loan Company opened in 1924, and in 1925 the Angelus Funeral Home was founded and the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company was established in a storefront office. Twenty-three years later, Golden State moved into a building designed by the African American architect Paul Williams and commissioned the murals on African American history in California.

Technical Features

How was the artwork made? (tools, materials, and processes)

When Charles Alston and Hale Woodruff arrived in Los Angeles to plan their murals, they met with Miriam Matthews, the first African American to work as a librarian in Los Angeles, and Titus Alexander, an authority on African American history, who had prepared material for them. The artists filled sketchbooks with drawings of local flowers and landforms as well as historic clothing. A conference was then called with Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company officials to select the subjects for the murals, and Alston and Woodruff were asked to decide on the time period each would portray. Alston chose exploration and colonization from 1527 to 1849; Woodruff selected settlement and development from 1850 to 1949. The artists planned how to include so many activities covering a large span of time and still maintain a cohesive composition between the murals. They also worked with the architect of the building, Paul Williams, so that the colors and style of the murals would complement the design of the lobby.

Woodruff constructed his mural by translating his research into visual images and then making small-scale painted studies that incorporated his sketches. These studies were then transferred onto large sheets of paper that had been marked with a grid. The paper was pricked and placed over a stretched canvas that had been prepared with gesso. Charcoal was placed over the holes so that when the paper was removed it left an outline of the composition on the canvas. The canvas was then ready for painting. Woodruff and Alston worked in the same studio in New York, and Woodruff modified his style to harmonize with Alston's work. Upon completion, the stretched, painted canvases were installed on opposite sides of the lobby of the Golden State building in Los Angeles.

Sensory Elements

What visual elements do I see in the artwork? (line, color, shape, light and dark, texture, mass, and space)

Throughout the entire picture, figures depict various actions that describe historic individuals and events. The figures appear as solid forms and are clearly outlined and painted with earth tones. Soil, rocks, trees, buildings, and water are painted in a lighter background surrounding the figures. All of the forms appear to have smooth surfaces.

Formal Organization

How do the elements in the artwork work together? (For example, are parts repeated, balanced, emphasized, contrasted?)

The artists played with the proportions of the figures so that those in the foreground are

the same size as those in the background. They also miniaturized the landscape so that the composition builds up rather than recedes into the distance. A warm palette of brown, red, and peach tones has been repeated throughout the painting with accents of blue, green, and black. There is a sense of the importance of each group of figures and a rhythm of movement from one historical event to another rather than one focal point or a progression through time and space.

Reproduction

How is the reproduction (digitized or printed image) different from the original artwork? (size, angle of view, surface texture, etc.)

The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development is a 197 by 111 inch mural that is installed in the lobby of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company building in Los Angeles. Although the reproduction looks smooth, the mural has surface texture from the brush strokes of the artist. While the reproduction shows only the front view of the mural, the original can be seen from many different perspectives from within the building.

Contextual Information

What can I find out about when and where the artwork was made?

Natural Context

What is the natural environment like where the artwork was made? (for example, climate, landforms, natural resources)

Southern California has a mild climate, bright sunlight, and blue skies. Mountains, the desert, and the ocean are in close proximity, producing a variety of plant life, such as cacti, brightly colored flowers, and evergreens.

Functional Context

How is/was the artwork used?

The murals by Woodruff and Alston function as a visual reminder of a history of the United States that has not been a part of the narrative that is taught to most citizens. The works also play an important role in informing the African American community in Los Angeles of its history. A publication from the commissioning company states:

> Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company has retold a part of the little known story of Black people's contribution to

> California history through two mural paintings. Why historical murals in the offices of a financial institution? Such an institution cannot separate itself from the cultural life of its community. It has a responsibility not only to support but to stimulate all aspects of community development. And what better way to encourage a people to greater accomplishment than through a constant reminder of their splendid heritage? (Golden State Mutual Life, n.d., p. 4)

Cultural Context

What can I determine about what people thought, believed, or did in the culture in which the artwork was made?

A small number of African Americans continued to migrate to California after the stock market crash in 1929. However, few moved out of the South, because they were less apt to find employment in new areas. Los Angeles also had a high rate of unemployment among African Americans during the Depression, and those who were working were restricted to service jobs and excluded from unions. However, unemployed African Americans were more likely to receive relief payments and federal jobs in California; there were better opportunities for education; and, although police brutality was a problem, it was not any worse than in the North or South, and in the West there was some legal recourse.

In 1939 many groups of Americans migrated to work in defense plants in various areas of the country. In the South, few African Americans were hired in defense production, even in menial positions. California also excluded African Americans from defense job training until 1942, when Los Angeles had an acute labor shortage and relaxed its labor restrictions. Between 1942 and 1947, approximately eight hundred thousand African Americans migrated to Los Angeles, many coming from the Mississippi Delta andTexas.

By 1949, when Hale Woodruff and Charles Alston were painting The Negro in California History, Los Angeles had the largest African American community in the West. Even though many African Americans lost their jobs with the end of the war, few left Los Angeles. Public training facilities remained open to them, so they were not relegated to the prewar conditions of not being able to secure training or employment. However, residential segregation meant that housing congestion was a serious problem. Restrictive covenants were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1948, but White resistance continued to prevent African Americans from securing homes in some parts of Los Angeles and in most of the suburbs. Additionally, relations with the police were a constant source of friction. African Americans found alone at night were often taken to jail on charges of vagrancy, and violent treatment was reported.

Artworld Context

What can I learn about the art ideas, beliefs, and activities that were important in the culture in which the artwork was made?

In the United States during the 1920s the recognition of African art and the acceptance of jazz by Europeans led cultural leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois to believe that art, and the recognition that African Americans were capable of great art, could change racial perceptions. It was during this time of crisis in race relations in the United States that the Harmon Foundation responded by offering awards to outstanding African Americans. The award for visual arts, which had such an impact on Hale Woodruff, came about because of this belief that art could influence racial attitudes.

During the 1930s artists in the United States were interested in social content and regional themes. After the war, however, artists who continued to work in these styles were generally ignored by galleries. European refugees who explored modern styles had a great deal of influence on the New York art world, and the newly formed Museum of Modern Art and Museum of Non-Objective Art provided exhibitions on modern movements. Avant-garde artists were searching for something that would acknowledge the abstractions of European modernism and yet remain distinctly American. Due to these circumstances, many artists turned to ideas from their own imagination and to art outside European traditions, such as African art.

Some African American artists, such as Charles White and Elizabeth Catlett, continued to produce art that was socially motivated, while others, such as Norman Lewis and Romare Bearden, began to experiment with abstract styles. Many of those artists who had studied in Europe—Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson, Archibald Motley, Lois Mailou Jones, and Hale Woodruff were influenced by what they considered their African heritage as well as the modern styles in Europe. These artists "pioneered the development of Black consciousness by relating themselves to different artistic traditions, thus creating a bond between different cultures. In so doing, not only did they open many paths to the development of contemporary Afro-American art, they also contributed to the growth of American art" (Bernard, 1989, p. 15).

Viewpoints for Interpretation

What can I find out about what the artwork meant to people when and where it was made and what it means to people now?

Art Maker

Why did the art maker want the artwork to look the way it does?

The mural reflects Hale Woodruff's idea that African American history should be made available to African Americans. He felt the role of African American artists was extremely important in society: "We have this very living consequence and awareness of Blackness and how we can make it functionally significant, how we can share it, how we can contribute to it...what is important in our efforts and in our work is we try to meet and face these problems day by day" (Murray, 1979, p. 87).

Because it was a collaborative work, the mural also reflects Woodruff's modification of his artistic style to that of Charles Alston, the historical research of Miriam Matthews and Titus Alexander, the decisions of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company on what information should be included in the mural, and the decision of the architect, Paul Williams, on how the mural could best enhance the lobby space of the building.

Artworld Viewer

How did the person(s) for whom the artwork was made (for example, a patron, user, or other viewer of the time) understand it?

The murals of Hale Woodruff and Charles Alston were commissioned for the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. When the works were installed, they initiated a collection of artworks by African American artists. According to African American Art and Artists:

> The murals offer an extensive range of color as well as expressive forms interwoven in overlapping triangular patterns. Still, each historical event is easily seen as a separate part of the total composition. The artistic foundations of Alston and Woodruff, both secure artists with great skill in formal organization, are demonstrated by their control over the dramatic shapes in these two compositions. Each artist obviously made an effort to adjust his painting to the setting, each panel being a harmonious part of the architectural whole. It is also obvious that the artists used the challenge of the structure as a guide in organizing the historical message of the murals. Both the Alston and Woodruff murals fulfill their purpose admirably, each telling a story from a point of view that is interesting and readily understandable. Thus they prove the great capabilities of their respective artists in handling the expressive and technical challenges demanded by the subject and the setting. (Lewis, 1994, p. 119)

Cultural Understanding

How was the artwork understood within the culture in which it was made?

Hale Woodruff once said that he always regretted not knowing about African art earlier in his life: "We were told that we were only slaves and savages and not shown this art" (Bearden and Henderson, 1993, p. 213). The knowledge that Africans have produced art as rich as any made in ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, or America; that African people have a cultural heritage that predates slavery; that Africans and African Americans did not readily submit to slavery; and that African Americans have made important contributions to the material and cultural development of the United States and yet have had to struggle against racist systems of oppression are important concepts that are missing in the education of most people in the United States. African Americans are likely to understand these murals as a documentation of their history in California—as an intellectual and artistic tradition that fosters resistance and activism and contributes to changing conditions and attitudes.

Other Viewpoints

Are there other people's viewpoints you want to consider? If so, whose?

Among the various groups whose viewpoints might be enriched by these murals are other groups of people whose lands have been colonized by more powerful countries. These people, who have been treated as second-class citizens and whose cultures and histories have also been in danger of being lost, may recognize the struggle of African Americans in California as a human struggle for liberation and draw strength from their achievements.

Connections among Artworks

What can I find out about connections between this artwork and other artworks?

Style

How does this artwork look like other artworks?

In the 1930s African American artists were particularly drawn to the social perspective of the Mexican muralists-art that grew out of class struggle and that established a distinct cultural identity. Aaron Douglas (Aspects of Negro Life), Charles White (The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy), Archibald Motley (U.S. Mail), Charles Alston, and Hale Woodruff painted murals with heroes that were rooted in African American history and culture. That these artists were presenting proud and uplifting images of African Americans was a radical departure from popular social

images, such as the film The Birth of a Nation, that fueled mob violence and segregation practices.

Woodruff was particularly influenced by Diego Rivera, who had also studied in Europe, exploring the works of Paul Cézanne and emulating the cubists before turning to Social Realism. Woodruff also worked in styles of Social Realism and Regionalism during the Depression. When he moved to New York from Atlanta in 1943, however, he explored the use of African symbolism in highly structured, abstract compositions.

The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development was painted in 1949, after the artist had experimented with many styles and during a period of rapid changes in the artworld as the United States moved from the Great Depression to the Cold War. Woodruff modified his style to correspond with the work of Charles Alston (an artist who was also beginning to incorporate African imagery into his paintings) so that the two murals would look much as if they had been painted by the same person. Woodruff used realistic figures to depict scenes from African American history in California, although in his later mural, The Art of the Negro (1952), his figures are much more abstract.

Influence

How did earlier artworks influence this artwork? How did/might it influence later artworks?

The common struggles against economic, political, and cultural subjugation have resulted in an exchange of artistic ideas among Mexican nationals, Chicanos, and African Americans. Just as Mexican artists who studied in Europe felt the influence of Cubism and other modern art movements, so too did the African American artists who studied there between 1919 and 1939. European avant-garde artists were experimenting with art-making processes and thinking about the separation of art from photographic reality. They also responded to the emotional impact of abstracted forms and symbols in the art that had been brought into Europe in the late nineteenth century. Because African art revealed the rich ancient cultural heritage of Africa, previously unknown by most North, South, and Central Americans, it inspired African American artists as well as Mexican artists to look to their own cultural heritage, before European invasions and colonization, as a basis for the form as well as the content of their work.

African American artists in New Deal mural programs sponsored by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) were influenced by the Mexican muralists who were working and lecturing in the United States. Hale Woodruff was inspired by the power he saw in mural painting and believed it was a way to make history available to African Americans. When he received a grant to study with Diego Rivera in Mexico in 1934, not only did he learn the techniques of fresco painting, he was also able to view murals such as Enslavement of the Indians and History of Mexico: From the Conquest to the Future,

which influenced the composition of his murals.

In the years during and following the WPA, murals as a form of public art were sustained by the patronage of African American institutions. In 1943, while Charles White was working on The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy at Hampton University in Virginia, the art educator and psychologist Viktor Lowenfeld organized a conference on the Mexican muralists. John Biggers, who assisted White with the mural, later taught at Texas Southern University in Houston, where his work and that of his students covers the campus walls. Woodruff's mural The Amistad Mutiny was commissioned by Alabama's Talladega College, The Negro in California History was commissioned by the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, and The Art of the Negro was commissioned by Atlanta University.

In the 1960s the artist William Walker (along with Jeff Donaldson) pioneered the street mural movement with The Wall of Respect in Chicago and The Wall of Dignity in Detroit. The Chicano mural movement started in Denver in 1967. Leo Tanguma, Houston's most important Chicano muralist, began his work with John Biggers at Texas Southern University the same decade.

Themes

What general ideas help connect this artwork to other artworks?

The Negro in California History is a historical narrative, as are such murals as Diego Rivera's History of Mexico: From the Conquest to the Future, Charles White's The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy, Hale Woodruff's The Amistad Mutiny and The Art of the Negro, Aaron Douglas's Aspects of Negro Life, Archibald Motley's U.S. Mail, and Charles Alston's Harlem Hospital Murals. Battle of Little Big Horn [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/kicking.html], by Kicking Bear (Mato Wanartaka), is also a historical narrative.

African American Art

My Cultural Heritage and History

Lesson Overview

Everyone has a history and a cultural heritage that helps him or her understand who he or she is. Through the lens of works by four African American artists, students will learn that:

- art is the visual expression of cultural beliefs and values
- we have inherited traditional art forms from people around the world
- art can help us understand that one element of a work of art is its subject matter

As they examine these concepts, students will explore their own cultural heritage as well as that of their classmates, friends, neighbors, and family. They will look closely at the subject matter of three key artworks and create a bulletin board and assemblages that further their exploration of cultural heritage.

Objectives

1. Art Making: Students examine how artists address history through the subject matter of their artworks.
2. Art History and Social Studies: Students understand that cultural heritage, history, and artistic expression can be means of displaying and instilling pride and make a cultural heritage display.
3. Social Studies: Students explore their cultural heritage and that of their classmates through the lens of African American history and culture.
4. Art Criticism: Students understand that while the subject matter of artworks may appear to be realistic, it may also be symbolic.
5. Art Making: Students create assemblages using objects as symbols of cultural heritage.

The attached Assessment Guides can be used to determine the level of mastery your students have achieved in reaching these objectives.

Preparation

Read through the lesson, carefully adapting it to your teaching style and available resources. Decide which activities are most appropriate for your students—even early elementary children should be able to participate to some degree in all of the activities for this lesson. Assemble necessary resources.

Time Requirements

This lesson requires varying lengths of time, depending on the age of the students, your teaching style, and available resources. Students may need several days to collect materials for the bulletin board and assemblages.

Activities: My Cultural Heritage and History

Basic Activities

- Part I: Our Cultural Heritage
- Part II: Subject Matter

Optional Activities

- Symbolism
- California History: A Different Mirror

African American Art

My Cultural Heritage and History

Assessment Guides

Basic Activity: Part I
Our Cultural Heritage

Beginner: Students understand the concept of cultural heritage and contribute to the class bulletin board.

Competent: Students understand the concept of cultural heritage, can give examples of cultural symmbols, and contribute to the class bulletin board.

Advanced: Students understand the concept of cultural heritage, can give examples of cultural symbols and provide personal reflections, and contribute to the class bulletin board. Students can also provide personal reflections about how it feels to leave home and family and why people migrate to other places.

Basic Activity: Part II
Subject Matter

Beginner: Students can identify the subject matter of an artwork and contribute to or create a simple assemblage.

Competent: Students can describe the subject matter of an artwork, and can contribute to or create a simple assemblage, and thoughtfully discuss its subject matter and meaning.

Advanced: Students can speculate about the meaning of the subject matter of an artwork and contribute to or create a complex assemblage with a well-thought-out placement of objects. Students can discuss the meaning of the subject matter they chose as well as the meanings created by the combined energy of the objects..

African American Art

My Cultural Heritage and History

Resources

Part I
Our Cultural Heritage

- reproductions of the four key artworks
  - Willie Robert Middlebrook, In His Own Image, from the series Portraits of My People
  - Betye Saar, Nine Mojo Secrets
  - Charles White, General Moses (Harriet Tubman)
  - Hale Woodruff, The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development
- information about the lives of the artists
- U.S. and world maps
- small photographs of students
- yarn, ribbon, or wire
- pictures of cultural heritage symbols, such as shamrocks, kente cloth,
- Pennsylvania Dutch designs, religious images, and clothing for special events such as powwows
- pictures of traditional art forms from around the world

Part II
Subject Matter

- reproductions of the four key artworks
  - Willie Robert Middlebrook, In His Own Image, from the series Portraits of My People
  - Betye Saar, Nine Mojo Secrets
  - Charles White, General Moses (Harriet Tubman)
  - Hale Woodruff, The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development
- found objects and materials for an assemblage:
  - plastic toys
  - coins and metal found in the street
  - wire
  - boxes
  - discarded housewares

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- sections of discarded high-tech instruments
- fabrics
- cardboard cutouts
- paints
- Popsicle sticks
- newspapers and magazines
- photographs
- printed paper items
- shells
- leaves
- rubbings in pencil or crayon
- torn posters
- computer printouts
- crumpled or crushed paper
- glue
- cardboard

My Cultural Heritage and History

Vocabulary

You may want to introduce the following vocabulary in conjunction with this lesson:

- ancestors
- architect
- artifact
- artistic expression
- assemblage
- commission
- contemporary
- culture
- cultural heritage
- diversity
- drawing
- found objects
- history
- immigrants
- inherit
- legacy
- mural
- slavery
- style
- subject matter
- symbols
- tradition
- visual art

My Cultural Heritage and History

Basic Activity: Part 1
Our Cultural Heritage

Overview Reminder:
Through the lens of works by four African American artists, students will learn that:

- art is the visual expression of cultural beliefs and values
- we have inherited traditional art forms from people around the world
- one element of a work of art is its subject matter.

Students will explore their own cultural heritage as well as that of their classmates, friends, neighbors, and family. They will look closely at the subject matter of three key artworks and create a bulletin board and assemblages that further their exploration of cultural heritage.

Ask students to think of the places that Americans are from. For example, American Indians are native to the Americas. Other people have African or European ancestors who arrived after 1492. Still others came more recently from Asia, Africa, Australia, the Pacific Islands, South America, other parts of North America, and Europe.

Explain that for centuries people who settled in the United States have exchanged and borrowed cultural traditions. However, because Europeans first colonized North America, European cultures have been dominant. At first, most Africans came involuntarily as slaves and were not allowed to bring their material possessions with them or to own property. Many Africans in America resisted slavery by running away or revolting. Despite these terrible conditions, African Americans survived and contributed to the growth of the United States and its culture. They remembered their songs, ceremonies, stories, and art forms, which they passed on to their children.

Some African American artists have been inspired by the heroic efforts of their ancestors to overcome what must have seemed like insurmountable obstacles. Through art they have sought to preserve their people's history, which contributes to a sense of pride not only for African Americans but also for all Americans.

After briefly displaying the key artworks, ask students to read (or summarize for them) information about the lives of the four artists in this unit: Hale Woodruff, Charles White, Betye Saar, and Willie Robert Middlebrook. Ask students:

- What heritage do these artists have in common? (They are all African American; Saar also celebrates her Native American and European ancestry.)

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- Where have these artists traveled? (On maps of the United States and the world, mark such places as Indianapolis; Chicago; New Orleans;Hampton, Virginia (the site of Hampton University); Washington, D.C.; Harlem; Mexico City; Paris; and Los Angeles (including Watts and nearby Compton and Pasadena.)

- What connects these artists to California? (Woodruff worked in Los Angeles, White lived and worked in the area, Saar was born in and works in Pasadena, and Middlebrook moved to the Los Angeles area as a young man and continues to live and work in Compton.)

Ask students to think about the immigrants coming from other parts of the world to California. How might the newcomers have felt about leaving their families and friends behind? Have students consider their own family's story. They can talk to relatives, friends, and neighbors to learn more about their personal cultural background. Ask students:

- What brought their families to the area where they now live?

- What about their culture contributes to their sense of pride?

- What are some traditional forms of culture, such as food, clothing, language, and artistic expression, that have remained in their family?

- What contemporary traditions and cultural expressions have been developed by their immediate family that reflect traditions that have come from other ethnic or racial groups?

Students will create a bulletin board that reflects the cultural heritage of the class. Post a large world map on the bulletin board. Ask students to indicate places on the map where they or their ancestors are from. Small photographs of each student can be connected to countries or states of origin with yarn, ribbon, or wire.

Ask students to think of contemporary patterns, forms, or images that remind Americans of particular cultures. Often these traditional symbols are associated with holidays and celebrations. Examples might include shamrocks (Ireland), kente cloth (West Africa), Pennsylvania Dutch designs (Germany), or the Kokopelli rock art figure (southwestern American Indian).

Using magazines, postcards, art prints, or images printed from the Internet, have students locate pictures of traditional art forms from around the world. If possible, students can select those that reflect their own cultures. Arrange these images on the bulletin board around the world map, with yarn, ribbon, or wire connecting each picture to the continent of its origin. After creating the bulletin board, ask students to reflect on the richness of their class's diversity.

African American Art

My Cultural Heritage and History

Basic Activity: Part 2
Subject Matter

Define subject matter as the people, places, ideas, or things that an artwork depicts. Explain to students that the subjects may or may not be realistic, and that even things that are depicted realistically are often symbolic (that is, they have meanings that may not be easily understood outside of the culture). Artists may work from ideas that reinforce established, traditional viewpoints or inspire people to think of their world in new and different ways. Note that artists often work with models, setting up poses and costumes that portray an idea they wish to convey rather than depicting a real situation. Even photographers frame what is included in their pictures to convey certain ideas.

Overview Reminder:
Through the lens of works by four African American artists, students will learn that:

- art is the visual expression of cultural beliefs and values
- we have inherited traditional art forms from people around the world
- one element of a work of art is its subject matter.

Students will explore their own cultural heritage as well as that of their classmates, friends, neighbors, and family. They will look closely at the subject matter of three key artworks and create a bulletin board and assemblages that further their exploration of cultural heritage.

Display a reproduction of General Moses (Harriet Tubman) by Charles White. Have students describe the person and the landscape in the drawing. Ask the class:

- Who is this woman? Why is she called General Moses? (She is Harriet Tubman, who is called "Moses" in reference to the biblical figure who led the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt.) (See Electronic and Other Resources for links to more information about Harriet Tubman.)
- Why do you think the artist has drawn the rock, ground, and woman so closely together? (Perhaps White was suggesting that Tubman's moral and physical strength is symbolized by the rock.)
- What do you think is the subject matter of General Moses?

- Is General Moses realistic?

- What idea or feeling is the artist trying to convey? If the artist arranged Tubman and the rock in a different way, would the artwork have a different meaning to viewers?

- Why would Charles White have felt it so important to use Harriet Tubman as the subject matter for this print in the 1960s? What did she symbolize for African Americans during this period? (Harriet Tubman is an important symbol of African American self-determination in the reality of White oppression or Black Power.)

Compare this drawing to a photograph of Harriet Tubman [http://www.inform.umd.edu//Pictures/WomensStudies/PictureGallery/tubman.gif].

Ask students:

- Compared to the photograph of Tubman, is White's drawing realistic or not?

Discuss the history of African Americans in California from 1850 until 1949, the subject of Hale Woodruff's mural The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development. Provide students with background information on the work.

Ask students:

- What are people doing in the mural?

- Are these people from other times? How do you know? Have you heard of any of the people shown in the mural?

- What more do you want to know about them?

After reviewing the background information about the mural, discuss the following questions:

- Who was involved in making the decisions about what subject matter to include and what style and color to use?
- How did Hale Woodruff and Charles Alston manage to make their works look similar?
- Why did the insurance company commission the mural? What role did it play in developing the final product?
- How might the architect have contributed to the making of the mural?

Tell students that both White's General Moses and Woodruff's The Negro in California History—Settlement and Development are realistic works.

The next artwork that students will examine—Betye Saar's Nine Mojo Secrets—is nonrealistic. Ask students:

- What do you think the subject matter of Nine Mojo Secrets is?
- How is the subject matter of Nine Mojo Secrets represented differently than the subject matter of General Moses?
- How are they both symbolic?
- Can you identify what they both symbolize? (They are both symbolic of spiritual power and of the ability of African American people to survive and to keep working toward democracy and justice or Black power.)

Tell students that for more than forty years Saar has been known as an eloquent artist who creates assemblages with found objects. She uses cultural artifacts taken from her experiences as an African American women born and raised in California. Saar states that her artistic process includes:

1. The ideas, thoughts, memories, and dreams from her life.
2. The search for collecting, gathering, and discarding objects.
3. Recycling and transforming objects into an artistic form.
4. Sharing, exhibiting, and experiencing the work.

Students will be asked to create an assemblage that includes these four processes.

An assemblage differs from a painting or a collage because it is three-dimensional. It includes three-dimensional discarded objects as well as two-dimensional images such

as photographs, newspaper clippings, or other items. Many twentieth-century artists have created assemblages that record history in a compelling and forceful manner.

Assemblages can be used with children of various ages since there is no carving or shaping of plaster or wood. This method involves an additive practice; the manual control level is one that can be used by elementary through high school and college students. See the resources section for suggested materials to be used in an assemblage.

Students should have plenty of time to discuss their concepts, the subject of their work, the culture, and their symbols with the teacher and with each other. They should arrange and rearrange the assemblage parts until they are satisfied before affixing them permanently. When the project is completed, the entire assemblage can be coated with a transparent acrylic medium for durability.

As an alternative to creating individual assemblages, students can collaborate to create a class work that incorporates objects and images selected by each student.

My Cultural Heritage and History

Optional Activity
Symbolism

Discuss with students the idea that some artists use symbols to help provide clues about the subject matter of their artworks.

Locate some expressions of the cultural values of people who live in the United States (for example, a photograph of the Statue of Liberty or of Plymouth Rock, a United States flag, or the lyrics to a patriotic song).

- Ask students to think about how these cultural expressions explain who we are as a country and what we value. Explain that although Liberty is portrayed as a woman, the statue refers to a concept that we value rather than to a real person.

Overview Reminder:
Through the lens of works by four African American artists, students will learn that:

- art is the visual expression of cultural beliefs and values
- we have inherited traditional art forms from people around the world
- one element of a work of art is its subject matter.

Students will explore their own cultural heritage as well as that of their classmates, friends, neighbors, and family. They will look closely at the subject matter of three key artworks and create a bulletin board and assemblages that further their exploration of cultural heritage.

- Ask students to think about religious symbols in the United States, such as the Christian cross, Jewish star, and Islamic crescent, and about holiday symbols, such as hearts, Santa Claus, turkeys, skeletons, etc.

- Ask students to describe the meaning of these symbols. Would someone from a culture outside of the United States know these meanings? How many of these symbols have come from cultures outside of the United States?

Explain to students that we may recognize objects of visual expression from other cultures but may not know their symbolic meaning. For example, the little dog in Jan van Eyck's Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu /ArtsEdNet/Images/P/arnolfini.html]symbolizes loyalty between husband and wife; the goddess in A Buddhist Altarpiece [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S /altar.html] represents wisdom, the female aspect of the divine; the concentric circles in

the Chumash Rock Painting [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/chumash.html] are believed to symbolize the cosmos; and the little people in Elizabeth Adela Armstrong Forbes's Will o' the Wisp [http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/will.html] are folk symbols of a desirable, yet unobtainable, goal.

Ask students to think about themselves, who they are as people, and what is important to them. Then ask them to imagine that they will be going on a long journey; perhaps they will be one of the first persons to explore outer space. Once they leave the Earth, they may never return to see their friends again. Ask them to think of how they would like their friends to remember them. Then tell students that they are going to make a design that will represent, symbolically, who they are, and that they will leave this depiction of themselves with their friends. The design for this could be taken from something in nature and look very realistic, could be completely abstract, or could be a form taken from nature that has been simplified. It could include both geometric or organic shapes, some form of lettering or other cultural symbol, and also a short written message. However, it must be symbolic of an essential quality of the person.

Students should discuss what they value in each other and what their perception is of the essential qualities they all possess. Once they have decided on the quality that best symbolizes who they are, students need to decide how they will represent that quality. They should sketch several ideas before deciding on the design they prefer, then enlarge, embellish, or simplify it, using colored markers to finish the design. Display the designs together as a unit (on a bulletin board or large poster) and, as a class, discuss if and how each student was successful in symbolizing her or his quality and if and how the total composition of designs symbolizes the class.

My Cultural Heritage and History

Optional Activity
California History: A Different Mirror

Assign students to do further research on the history of people of color in California (Ronald Takaki's A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America is a good resource). Include Native American peoples (the Chumash and others), early Mexican settlers, Asian pioneers from China and Japan, the Buffalo Soldiers (African American cowboys), and Chicanos. Ask students to think about the kinds of work these groups of people did and the ways in which their experiences were similar or different. How did all of these groups of people struggle to make California a better place for their children? How would Hale Woodruff's mural be different or the same if it contained these different groups of people?

Overview Reminder:
Through the lens of works by four African American artists, students will learn that:

- art is the visual expression of cultural beliefs and values
- we have inherited traditional art forms from people around the world
- one element of a work of art is its subject matter.

Students will explore their own cultural heritage as well as that of their classmates, friends, neighbors, and family. They will look closely at the subject matter of three key artworks and create a bulletin board and assemblages that further their exploration of cultural heritage.

African American Art

Styles of Cultural Expression

Lesson Overview

We are all influenced by the culture around us. Some of these influences can be seen in the styles of clothing we wear, the music we listen to, and the objects we collect. Different styles can also be seen in artists' work. In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of

- styles in popular culture and art
- the styles that influenced the four African American artists studied in this unit

Students will create a print that includes images symbolizing issues important to them. After learning about stylistic influences on the four artists, students will create a surrealistic painting that expresses ideas about moral and social justice.

Objectives

1. Art History: Students examine the meaning of style as an expression of culture from a particular location and time period.

2. Art Making: Students understand that artists may use a variety of styles to depict the subject matter of their artwork.

3. Art Criticism: Students understand that even though artists in one time and place use a variety of styles, the meanings of artworks may refer to similar cultural values.

4. Art History: Students understand that African American art has numerous influences.

5. Art Making: Students make prints and a collage about social issues that concern them.

6. Art Crticism: Students recognize the difference between the styles of realism and abstraction and between abstract styles that are non-objective and those that have abstracted the recognizable subject matter.

7. Aesthetics and Art History: Students understand that social situations, political circumstances, and cultural practices have contributed to the philosophical issues that have influenced the work of African American artists.

The attached Assessment Guides can be used to determine the level of mastery your students have achieved in reaching these objectives.

Preparation

Read through the lesson, carefully adapting it to your teaching style and available resources. Decide which activities are most appropriate for your students. Assemble necessary resources.

Time Requirements

This lesson requires varying lengths of time, depending on the age of the students, your teaching style, and available resources. At least one week is required for students to gain an understanding of artistic styles, and another week is needed to complete the surrealist painting activity.

Activities: Styles of Cultural Expression

Basic Activities

- Style
- Stylistic Influences

Optional Activities

- Styles of Art Discussion
- Get Real Drawing Activity
- Art Styles Research

African American Art

Styles of Cultural Expression

Assessment Guides

Part I
Style

Beginner: Students can define the term style.

Competent: Students can define the term style and are able to explain the difference between representational and nonobjective abstract art and realistic art styles.

Advanced: Students can define the term style and are able to explain the difference between representational and nonobjective abstract art and realistic art styles. Students can also point out symbolic meaning and the style of at least one of the artworks in this unit.

Part II
Stylistic Influences

Beginner: Students can describe the styles of the artworks in this unit.

Competent: Students can describe the styles of the artworks in this unit and identify the stylistic influences on the African American artists who created the works.

Advanced: Students can describe the styles of the artworks in this unit and identify the stylistic influences on the African American artists who created the works. Students can also speculate about the philosophical issues that have influenced one of the artists.

African American Art

Styles of Cultural Expression

Resources

Part I
Style

- magazines, postcards, and the like containing past styles of clothing, cars, etc.
- reproductions of the four key artworks
- reproductions of Charles White's Freedom Now and Wanted Poster #5
- sketchpads
- Styrofoam trays and pencils with dull points or linoleum and linoleum
- cutters
- brayers
- acrylic paint or india ink
- paper

Part II
Stylistic Influences

- reproductions of the four key artworks
- Artworld Context sections from the key artworks
- black-and-white and/or color photographs
- magazines
- white glue
- illustration board
- paper
- markers
- pencils
- watercolor
- acrylic paints (various colors)
- colored
- twelve-by-fourteen-inch stretched canvas
- tracing paper
- paintbrushes

Styles of Cultural Expression

Vocabulary

You may want to introduce the following vocabulary in conjunction with this lesson:

- abstraction
- civil rights
- collections
- composition
- context
- cultural values
- influence
- issues
- line
- meaning
- media
- objective
- nonobjective
- pattern
- popular culture
- protest
- realism
- rhythm
- shape
- social perceptions
- stereotypes
- style
- stylize
- subject matter
- symbolize

African American Art

Styles of Cultural Expression

Basic Activity: Part 1
Style

Overview Reminder:
We are all influenced by the culture around us. In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of

- styles in popular culture and art
- the styles that influenced the four African American artists studied in this unit

Students will create a print that includes images symbolizing issues important to them. After learning about stylistic influences on the four artists, students will create a surrealistic painting that expresses ideas about moral and social justice.

Explain to students that the culture of a time and place influences the artistic expression of that culture. This is true not only for what is considered fine art but also for other forms of the arts, such as architecture, literature, and the performing arts. It is perhaps most true for the ways we express ourselves artistically through our clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, cars, and home decorations.

Ask students to find pictures in magazines, newspapers, and other sources of cars, clothing, and hairstyles that were previously popular in the United States, such as when their parents or grandparents were teenagers. Students contribute their pictures to a visual time line. After everyone has had a chance to look at all of the pictures, ask students to discuss their opinions of the styles.

- Which styles seem strange?
- Which styles have been revived?
- Which styles would they consider emulating?
- Have any of these popular styles been influenced by the visual or performance arts of their time?
- How might our present styles appear to people in the future?

Discuss with students the idea that artworks also have styles. Define style as the distinctive visual characteristics shared by artworks from a particular period and place.

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Artists influence one another, and their work often may have similar:

- media (oil paint on canvas, for instance, or carved wood)
- compositions (for example, landscapes might all have a foreground, middle ground, and background)
- subject matter (animals, gods, famous people, etc.)
- colors (such as earth tones produced by natural pigments)
- sizes (like miniature portraits)
- symbolism (imagery connected to spiritual beliefs, for instance)

Discuss the meaning of realism and abstraction in artworks by considering the following:

Realism: In realistic artworks, the people, objects, or landscapes look very lifelike and may be considered a copy of nature. Realistic artworks always have a recognizable subject and portray things found in our everyday existence, such as human figures. Sometimes the images of everyday items symbolize other things. Examples of realistic twentieth-century artworks include:

- Felipe B. Archuleta, Baboon
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/baboon.html
- John Biggers, A Bountiful Catch
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/Biggers/bountiful.html
- Luis Jiménez, Howl
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/S/howl.html
- Oskar Kokoschka, Girl with Doll
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/girl.html
- Dorothea Lange, Jobless on Edge of Pea Field, Imperial Valley, California
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/Ecology/jobless.html
- Andy Warhol, Campbell's Condensed Tomato Soup
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/DP/campbell.html

Abstraction: In abstract artworks, the artist is not interested in depicting material reality. Such art may have a recognizable subject that has been simplified or stylized or may be completely removed from concrete representation, giving visual form to something nonvisual, like emotions or sensations. Examples of twentieth-century

abstract art include:

- Michael Cummings, Springtime in Memphis: At Night
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/T/spring.html

- Morris Lewis, Alpha Tau
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/alpha.html

- Georgia O'Keeffe, Autumn Leaves - Lake George, N.Y.
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/Ecology/Lankford/autumn.html

- Joseph Stella, Battle of Lights, Coney Island, Mardi Gras
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/lights.html

- Nadezhda Andreevna Udaltsova, At the Piano
  http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/piano.html

Display examples of the four key artworks in this curriculum unit and ask students to discuss the style of each work. Students should consider such questions as:

- Which of the works are realistic?

- Which are abstracted?

- Are any of them nonobjective?

- Which include multiple images?

- Is the artist trying to show what the person or place really looked like or is he or she more interested in using colors, lines, shapes, rhythms, or patterns to depict emotions?

- How can works of art that are considered realistic, such as General Moses, also be abstracted (simplified or stylized)?

- Which artworks depict religious ideas? Can any of them be considered realistic?

- Which artworks depict emotions? Can any of them be considered realistic?

- Which artworks depict nature? Can any of them be considered abstract?

Compare Charles White's Freedom Now located at website http://www.artsednet.getty .edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/freedom.html and Wanted Poster #5 located at http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/wanted.html to his General Moses.

- What is the subject matter of each of these works?
- What styles did the artist use? (General Moses is done in a realistic style; Freedom Now and Wanted Poster #5 have some recognizable forms but are more abstract.)
- What message did White bring to viewers? (Each work symbolizes the struggle against racism.)

(More examples of artwork with a political focus can be found on Chicana and Chicano Space, including student artwork.) http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/

Tell students that they are going to make individual prints that express their thoughts about an issue in contemporary society toward which they have strong feelings. Ask them to choose an issue that concerns them and think about how they might express that concern abstractly or symbolically. Have students sketch their proposed artwork. They should experiment with easily understood objects and simplified shapes that convey their ideas and share their drawing with classmates for their reactions.

When students are satisfied that their drawing conveys the message they have in mind, they carve their design into either Styrofoam with a dull pencil or linoleum with linoleum cutters. They will print the design by covering the Styrofoam or linoleum with ink or paint and pressing it onto a sheet of paper.

Students should add a title to their work and then display it. Ask students the following questions:

- Do any of the works have similar concerns?
- Do they use similar symbols?
- How are their styles similar to those of the artists studied in this unit? Different?
- What other artists might have been influences on students' work?
- Do the works show influences from contemporary culture, such as advertising, television, or music?
- Can art be used as a means to solve social problems?

Basic Activity: Part 2
Stylistic Influences

Discuss with students the idea that all artists are influenced by the culture around them, even if they think they are being completely original. Why do students think this happens? (Because certain materials are available, because of the desire to explore certain ideas or concerns, because of being inspired by the work of other artists, because of commercial reasons, etc.)

Overview Reminder:
We are all influenced by the culture around us. In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of

- styles in popular culture and art
- the styles that influenced the four African American artists studied in this unit

Students will create a print that includes images symbolizing issues important to them. After learning about stylistic influences on the four artists, students will create a surrealistic painting that expresses ideas about moral and social justice.

Display the four key artworks in this unit. Explain to students that twentieth-century African American art has been rich in influences. Important ones have included European, American, Mexican, African, and African American fine art and folk art styles. (Examples of these styles can be ound in Electronic and Other Resources.) Discuss the following points:

- Hale Woodruff studied art in Europe at a time when European artists were experimenting with abstract and nonrepresentational styles (including Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Fauvism, and Surrealism).
- Many twentieth-century European and American artists—especially African American artists—have been influenced by traditional African art.
- Hale Woodruff and Charles White worked with Mexican artists, who depicted political and historical themes (Social Realism).
- Woodruff studied the southern U.S. landscape and its meaning to African Americans (Regionalism).
- Saar has been influenced by African art, surrealism, the Watts Towers, Joseph

Cornell's boxes, and the spirituality of African and Latin American sacred objects.

- Middlebrook has been influenced by the themes of connection to ancestors found in African art as well as themes of social protest the works of Social Realist artists, such as Charles White. He makes changes to the photographs he takes in order to distort the camera's realistic images, which is a technique used by other postmodern artists.

Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Give each group a copy of one of the artworks from the unit and that artwork's Artworld Context section (Willie Robert Middlebrook, Betye Saar, Charles White, Hale Woodruff),if it is appropriate for their reading level. Ask the group to list the questions that come up about influences on the artists. Ask students to debate their own ideas about these issues, such as:

- Should artists be able to work with any kind of style and subject matter they want?
- Should artists be able to use any kind of materials or media to create their works?
- Should patrons be able to dictate subject matter or materials?
- Should the government or other organizations be able to dictate subject matter or materials?
- Should art portray heroes or ordinary people, social issues or personal feelings?
- Can artists appropriate visual images from other cultures for their own purposes? If so, when?
- Should textiles, crafts, and computer images be considered "art"?
- How should people of a particular race or gender be portrayed?
- Can art change social perceptions of groups of people?

Tell students that they are going to work on a project that explores Surrealism, one of the styles that influenced Betye Saar through the artworks of Surrealist artist, Joseph Cornell. Explain that in 1924 European artists who called themselves Surrealists sought to express "the true process of thought...free from the exercise of reason and from any aesthetic or moral purpose" (Janson, 1997, p. 807). These artists juxtaposed unlike objects to create a sense of time and space that are beyond reality and everyday life. Unlike Surrealist artists, African American artists often have a moral purpose for making art.

Ask students to:

- Collect a large variety of black-and-white and/or color photographs from family and friends that they may photocopy, or images from magazines. If cameras are available, have students take a series of pictures representing their community.

- Develop themes based on ideas from this lesson such as identity, self-worth, protest, anger, celebration, cultural heritage, civil rights, stereotypes, freedom, survival, healing, spiritual power, ancestors, Black power.

- Cut and/or tear enough images for two artworks.

- For the collage, arrange the torn or cut images in ways that suggest the unreal and the dreamlike by combining unlike elements such as a ball and a horse, a scissors and a rock, etc., or by distorting spatial perspective, elements of time and shadows, or human proportions.

- Place the images on an illustration board and play with the composition. Think about the repetition and interaction of colors, forms, and space before gluing images down.

Once this collage is completed, tell students that for the next composition they will be combining torn and/or cut images as well as letters of the alphabet or words with paint in order to create another type of collage that is similar to Charles White's Freedom Now which has letter and objects embedded in layers of paint. Ask students:

- Think of a social issue they wish to comment on.

- Use pencil to block in the main shapes on a canvas and give them each a layer of paint.

- Layer images and letters or words over the paint, glue images over images, and layer paint over images and letters or words until they have achieved a pleasing composition. They may gradually add more details or provocatively leave areas or words incomplete to challenge viewers as long as they can discuss the social message they wish to convey.

Styles of Cultural Expression

Optional Activity
Styles of Art Discussion

Locate images of artworks from various cultures and time periods, such as ancient Egyptian sculptures, medieval European paintings, Edo-period Japanese prints, Australian aboriginal art, and West African ceremonial objects. Ask students:

- What visual characteristics are shared by artworks from a particular location? From a particular time period?
- What values inspired these works of art?
- Does the artist appear to be more interested in the depiction of individual characteristics or a group ideal?
- Does the artist appear to be more interested in depicting the material or the spiritual world?
- How are animals depicted in relationship to humans? What beliefs or values might the animals symbolize?
- What beliefs or values might the humans symbolize?

Overview Reminder:
We are all influenced by the culture around us. In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of

- styles in popular culture and art
- the styles that influenced the four African American artists studied in this unit

Students will create a print that includes images symbolizing issues important to them. After learning about stylistic influences on the four artists, students will create a surrealistic painting that expresses ideas about moral and social justice.

African American Art

Styles of Cultural Expression

Optional Activity
Get Real Drawing Activity

Overview Reminder:
We are all influenced by the culture around us. In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of

- styles in popular culture and art
- the styles that influenced the four African American artists studied in this unit

Students will create a print that includes images symbolizing issues important to them. After learning about stylistic influences on the four artists, students will create a surrealistic painting that expresses ideas about moral and social justice.

Tell students that they will be portraying themselves as realistically as possible. For this exercise students will need to see themselves in a mirror so they can draw from their own image. Before beginning their portraits, prepare students by explaining head proportions and where to place the hairline, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, neck, and ears. Demonstrate on the board and/or hand out examples of how to draw a portrait. Ask students to look closely at their mirror image before beginning to draw and to start with an outline of the shape of their face and head before deciding where to place their features. Once they have looked at the correct placement and size of their features, students may begin to examine and draw the details of their face. While they are drawing, continue to encourage students to look carefully in order to draw what they see. When students have finished their pencil renderings, ask them to use oil pastels or tempera paint to apply color to their drawings. They will need to mix various colors to obtain skin, eye, and hair tones and to darken or lighten colors for shadows and three-dimensional qualities.

Explain to the class that modern artists, such as the Fauves, Expressionists, and Cubists, were more interested in the expressive rather than the natural or realistic use of color, line, and shape and that students are going to experiment with depicting things that are nonvisual. Use several class periods to have students experiment with color, line, and shape.

Tell students you want them to think about the feelings they associate with certain colors. Using crayons, paint, or markers, ask students to respond to the following questions with swatches of color only (no pictures or symbols of anything): What colors

would you use to paint a happy feeling? the taste of ice cream? the smell of a flower? softness? hurt, sadness, or embarrassment? a peaceful place?

Ask students to try out various kinds of lines on drawing paper and to describe them in terms such as straight, crooked, curving, dark, light, vertical, horizontal, fuzzy, crisp, soft, thin, thick, hard, repeated, broken, implied, rhythmic, etc. Then ask students to think about an emotion, such as happiness, and to imagine a time when they felt very happy. What made them feel that way? Tell students that when they have connected with those feelings, they are to use lines (without pictures or symbols of anything) to describe how happiness feels. Continue this lesson by asking them to think about other emotions, such as excitement or anger, and to describe those emotions using only various kinds of lines.

Draw a simple shape of an object that students recognize, such as an apple, heart, or shamrock. Explain that a shape is made by moving a line around until it meets itself. Ask students to think about how shapes can be described (large, small, geometric, organic, soft, hard-edged, repeated, etc.). Ask students to use simple shapes (no pictures or symbols of anything) to illustrate the following: growth, balance, mystery, cold, soft, red.

Ask students to think about who they are as individuals. Tell them that you want them to make a personal work of art using only color, line, and shape (no pictures or symbols of anything) to describe themselves. When they have finished these nonrepresentational portraits, ask students to compare the pictures with the realistic portraits they made earlier.

Ask students to use the mirror again, this time to study their expressions. How do their faces express happiness, sadness, loneliness, anger, etc? Ask them to imagine an emotion, study their face for the reflection of that emotion, and draw and paint their portrait using colors, lines, or shapes to portray their emotions rather than copying their natural image. For example, they may use color to fit the mood they wish to express; extend, exaggerate, or shorten lines; or make shapes more geometric, harder, or softer.

When students have finished this abstracted picture of themselves, ask them to compare it with their realistic and nonrepresentational portraits. Which do they think best describes who they are? What about them is best described by the realistic portrait, the nonrepresentational portrait, or the abstracted portrait? Is the realistic portrait real? What parts of their own image have they enlarged or given more thought to or more importance? Are the nonrepresentational and abstracted portraits also real in some way? How?

African American Art

Styles of Cultural Expression

Optional Activity
Art Styles Research

Ask students to choose one of the styles that influenced the four artists in this unit. Either individually or in groups, students will research that style and make a presentation to the class on their findings. They should consider the following questions:

- What are the visual qualities of these works?
- Who are some of the best-known artists who produced work in this style?
- Which artist's work interests you the most?
- What were some of the historical events of the time?
- What were people wearing? What kinds of transportation did they use?
- How were things different than they are now?

Overview Reminder:
We are all influenced by the culture around us. In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of

- styles in popular culture and art
- the styles that influenced the four African American artists studied in this unit

Students will create a print that includes images symbolizing issues important to them. After learning about stylistic influences on the four artists, students will create a surrealistic painting that expresses ideas about moral and social justice.

Possible research topics include:

- Cubism
- Expressionism
- Fauvism
- Folk art
- Futurism
- Impressionism
- Outsider art
- Pointillism
- Postmodernism
- Surrealism
- Symbolism

Examples of some of these styles can be found in Electronic and Other Resources.

African American Art

Interpreting Images

Lesson Overview

The culture that surrounds us often stereotypes people based upon their ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, and so on. In this lesson, students are introduced to the concept of stereotypes and the ways that people are represented in artworks. Students analyze images by African American artists and consider how the subject matter of their work contradicts stereotypes. Students will create posters that contrast stereotypical images with realistic images and a photographic essay that portrays their families, friends, and/or neighbors.

Objectives

Students:

1. Art History and Social Studies: Students understand that visual images that represent groups of people sometimes present those people as stereotypes rather than as individuals with human feelings and values.

2. Art Criticism: Students consider how some African American artists have attempted to contradict negative social perceptions and images of African Americans.

3. Art Making: Students make a poster contrasting stereotypical images with realistic images of everyday life.

4. Art Criticism: Students use ideas about visual representation as a way to interpret the meaning of artworks.

5. Art Making: Students consider photographs as a means of contradicting social perceptions and inspiring self-worth and make personal photographic essays to be included in a class album.

The attached Assessment Guides can be used to determine the level of mastery your students have achieved in reaching these objectives.

Preparation

Read through the lesson, carefully adapting it to your teaching style and available resources. Decide which activities are most appropriate for your students. Assemble necessary resources.

Time Requirements

This lesson requires varying lengths of time, depending on the age of the students, your teaching style, and available resources. Lessons could be spread out over a two-week period so that students have time to reflect on stereotypes and their effect. Depending on the availability of cameras, shooting pictures for the photographic essay could take anywhere from a few days to several weeks to complete.

Activities: Interpreting Images

Basic Activities

- Part I: Images and Stereotypes
- Part II: Images That Express Self-Worth

Optional Activities

- Telling Stories

Assessment Guides

Basic Activity: Part I
Images and Stereotypes

Beginner: Students understand that beliefs, values, hopes, and fears are essential human qualities regardless of stereotypical classifications in society.

Competent: Students understand that beliefs, values, hopes, and fears are essential human qualities regardless of stereotypical classifications in society and can describe at least one way in which someone is portrayed as a stereotype.

Advanced: Students understand that beliefs, values, hopes, and fears are essential human qualities regardless of stereotypical classifications in society and can describe at least one way in which someone is portrayed as a stereotype. Students can also recognize the ways in which some artists have contradicted negative stereotypes of people by portraying them with beauty and dignity.

Basic Activity: Part II
Images That Express Self-Worth

Beginner: Students can give at least one example of the ways in which stereotypes hurt all of us.

Competent: Students can give at least one example of the ways in which stereotypes hurt all of us and can describe at least one reason why the concept of race may not be a correct method of describing people.

Advanced: Students can give at least one example of the ways in which stereotypes hurt all of us and can describe at least one reason why the concept of race may not be a correct method of describing people. Students can also speculate on how their personal perspectives influenced the images of their family members, neighbors, classmates, and friends that they captured on film.

Resources

Part I
Images and Stereotypes

- reproductions of Henry Ossawa Tanner's The Banjo Lesson, Betye Saar'sThe Liberation of Aunt Jemima, Charles White's General Moses, and Faith Ringgold's Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?
- popular magazines and newspapers
- photographs of family members, neighbors, classmates, and friends
- poster board
- markers, colored pencils, or crayons

Part II
Images That Express Self-Worth

- reproduction of Willie Robert Middlebrook's In His Own Image
- photocopies of Artist's Statement
- reproductions of photographs by James Van der Zee and Gordon Parks
- photocopies of works by other African American photographers
- photocopies of Bell Hooks's statements
- a copy of Shades of L.A. Project (1996) or Life in a Day of Black L.A.: The Way We See It (1992)
- access to a camera in order to make personal photographic essays (a
- parent's or student's camera, a school camera, recyclable cameras)

African American Art

Interpreting Images

Vocabulary

You may want to introduce the following vocabulary in conjunction with this lesson:

- advertisements
- beliefs
- cartoon
- civil disturbance
- commercial art
- discrimination
- domestic worker
- photography
- popular art
- self-worth
- stereotypes
- subject matter
- values
- visual images

Artist's Statement

In His "Own" Image
Willie Robert Middlebrook

Hey you!
Look at me!
Don't look at what you think you see.
Look at me!
Look at me!
At me!

One day my grandfather woke up and he was here. Here, in this country. Now a slave...

He earned his own freedom; taught himself to write; fathered two families before he died.

My grandfather sings to me every night. He tells me his blood is in this land.

He sings, "Look at me! I am the land...
Look at me!

Look at me and you see you. Look at you and you see me. I tell you your blood is in this land."

My father would tell me that my art comes down through him from his father.

At night when I close my eyes my grandfather sings to me, "Look at you, you are the land. Look at you, you see me."

Look at me.

Interpreting Images

Basic Activity: Part 1
Images and Stereotypes

Overview Reminder:
The culture that surrounds us often stereotypes people based upon their ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, etc. In this lesson, students are introduced to the concept of stereotypes and the ways that people are represented in artworks. Students will create posters that contrast stereotypical images with realistic images and a photographic essay that portrays their families, friends, and/or neighbors.

Discuss the idea that stereotypes influence how we treat other people. As a way of defining the idea of a stereotype, ask students to write down a list of ten words or phrases that describe a character from a book or story they have all recently read or from a movie or video they have all seen as a class. These words can describe the character's physical qualities, personality, actions, and likes and dislikes. For example, the character might be a girl who has brown eyes, black hair, a funny smile, likes frogs, wants to be an astronaut, has a big brother, rides a bicycle to school, dislikes cake but likes ice cream, reads comic books, and stays up late on Fridays.

Ask students to pick one of the character's attributes, such as her black hair. Ask the students:

- What if this were the only thing you knew about this character? What would you think of her?
- What if everyone who met this character reacted to her based on her black hair? What if they decided they didn't like her because they didn't like black hair? Would that be fair?
- How would you feel if people decided they didn't like you because you had black hair? Would that be fair?

Explain that some African American artists have made artworks to contradict stereotypical notions society has held about their people. For example, around 1900, Black musicians and dancers were often portrayed as grotesque minstrel figures. The African American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner refuted this stereotype by painting a picture of a dignified African American man teaching a young child to play an instrument

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in The Banjo Lesson. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/P/banjo.html

Ask students to look closely at Betye Saar's Liberation of Aunt Jemima, which incorporates a stereotype of an African American woman used in advertising. http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/X/jemima.html Ask them:

- What do you see in this image? (Students might see what looks like a doll or a cartoon of an African American woman. The figure is holding a broom and a rifle. Behind the figure is a pattern of commercial images of Aunt Jemima. In front of the figure is another image of an African American woman holding a White baby. A Black clenched fist is in front of this image.)

- Have you seen an image similar to this one? Where?

- Who does the familiar face represent?

- How is the picture of a smiling domestic worker changed by adding a rifle? A clenched fist?

- Why do you think this artwork is called The Liberation of Aunt Jemima?

Ask students to compare The Liberation of Aunt Jemima with General Moses by Charles White. How are these images of African American women different? How are they similar? (Both focus on African American women and their strength. White's work is a realistic portrait that shows Harriet Tubman as a real person of great power. This image is in contrast to the stereotyped version of an African American woman taken by Saar from advertising images.)

Explain that the African American artist Faith Ringgold has also used Aunt Jemima as a character in her work. Ringgold has created a quilt that tells the story of a successful businesswoman, Jemima Blakey, titled Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima? Ask students:

- Why do you think artists like Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold work with stereotypes such as Aunt Jemima? (Stereotypes are robbed of their power to hurt people when they are turned into strong or positive images. Giving a realistic and dignified face to a person helps us to see them in human terms.)

Students will create a poster that contrasts commercial images with words describing how these images differ from real people and things. Ask students to collect commercial images in popular magazines and newspapers that show stereotypes of men and women of all ages and races—images may also show impossibly thin models, helpless women, macho men, and gangsters as role models, as well as impossibly manicured landscapes, expensively furnished homes that have never been lived in, etc.

Discuss how these images contribute to the assumptions students hold and how the

pictures make students feel about who they are and how they should look and act. Have students brainstorm lists of words describing how the images are stereotypes or unrealistic. Be funny and poetic. For example, words describing how an image of a beautiful man and woman driving a car along a deserted highway differ from students' experience of riding in cars could be:

- freeway
- rush hour
- going to school
- rain
- messy hair
- cracked windshield
- mom, dad, and the kids
- candy wrappers in back seat
- flat tire

Tell students that they will create a poster that mixes words and images. Individually or in groups, they will arrange cutouts of the commercial images on poster board. With markers, colored pencils, or crayons, they can write words on top of and around the images. Discuss students' works and ask them explain why they chose the words and images they placed on their posters.

Basic Activity: Part 2
Images That Express Self-Worth

Overview Reminder:
The culture that surrounds us often stereotypes people based upon their ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, etc. In this lesson, students are introduced to the concept of stereotypes and the ways that people are represented in artworks. Students will create posters that contrast stereotypical images with realistic images and a photographic essay that portrays their families, friends, and/or neighbors.

Display a reproduction of Willie Robert Middlebrook's In His Own Image. Explain that the artist used himself as the subject of these photographs. Through his work he is telling us what his reaction was to the verdict in the trial of the Los Angeles police officers who were accused of beating Rodney King in 1991, a beating that was videotaped and shown repeatedly on television. The police officers were tried in Simi Valley, a suburb distant from Los Angeles urban areas. The Simi Valley jury perceived that the officers were doing their job in subduing a criminal, while African Americans perceived the verdict as one more act of police violence that went unpunished.

Distribute a copy of Middlebrook's statement about the work. Read it to students or have them read it aloud. Ask them to think in particular about the following lines:

Hey you!
Look at me!
Don't look at what you think you see.
Look at me!
Look at me!
At me!

Ask students:

- What do you think the title of this artwork means? (The title refers to the concept that all human beings have physical differences but were given a spiritual essence by the same creator.)
- Why do you think the artist is sometimes covering his face with his hands?

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- What other gestures do you see in the work? (Gestures that stand for "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.")

- Why do you think the artist wiped out part or all of his image in some of the photographs? (Perhaps he thinks that he and his people are not being seen for who and what they are.)

Ask students to discuss how media images and social stereotypes of African Americans influence what people see.

- How do these images and stereotypes influence the kinds of discrimination that people experience in their daily lives?

- How do they influence how people feel about themselves?

Explain to students that African Americans have often been ignored in the realistic portrayal of life in the United States. African American photographers, however, have contributed to the depiction of everyday life in African American communities. Such photographers include James Van der Zee and Gordon Parks. Display the work of these photographers (see Electronic and Other Resources) or look for the work of contemporary African American photographers in your own community, city, or state. If possible, photocopy the work of some of these photographers and compare the images to popular representations and historic or contemporary stereotypes.

Discuss with students how family photographs can strengthen a sense of belonging and feelings of self-worth. Read bell hooks's statements about the importance of photographs in African American homes. Students might also look at and comment on photographs from Shades of L.A. (1996) or Life in a Day of Black L.A.: The Way We See It (1992). Ask students:

- How are these photographs different from the images presented by advertisers and the news media?

Assign students to look at any family photographs they might have. Ask students:

- What kinds of events in your family are considered important enough to photograph?

- What kinds of events are not photographed?

- Who in the family usually takes the pictures?

- Who arranges the photographs on a wall or in an album and makes copies for

family members?

- How does this person's vision of the family influence what is remembered?

Students will produce a photographic essay showing their perspective on their family, friends, and/or neighbors. Using recyclable cameras or cameras belonging to the school or students, prepare class members by telling them that their photographs should center on their interests. Students will develop a theme that directs what they are trying to show, such as everyday events, celebrations, a day in the life of a family member, etc. See Kids Framing Kids on ArtsEdNet to learn more about strategies for taking interesting photographs of people.
http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Exhibitions/Kids/index.html

Once the photographs have been taken and developed, ask students to arrange the images on a sheet of poster board and add captions, short stories, or poetry about the theme they have chosen. Students share their photographic essays and discuss their themes, the photographs they wanted to include or exclude, and how they used written text to enhance their ideas. Ask students to think about how their own photographs are different from or similar to popular media images. How does what they know and feel about their family members, neighbors, classmates, and friends influence their photographs? The students' work can then be made into a large-format class album that can be shared with other groups of students.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing the role of images in society as both negative and positive. Stereotypes in artworks and commercial images can reinforce feelings of low self-esteem and social discrimination, whereas positive images can contribute to feelings of self-worth. Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold, and Willie Robert Middlebrook are among those artists who want their work to contribute to positive images of African Americans.

Interpreting Images

Optional Activity
Telling Stories

From a popular magazine or newspaper, students choose an image of a person that seems to be a stereotype. Ask students to explain why they think the picture is a stereotype. They will then write a story about the person that gives him or her a name, a personality, and tells about his or her dreams and aspirations.

Overview Reminder:
The culture that surrounds us often stereotypes people based upon their ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, etc. In this lesson, students are introduced to the concept of stereotypes and the ways that people are represented in artworks. Students will create posters that contrast stereotypical images with realistic images and a photographic essay that portrays their families, friends, and/or neighbors.

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African American Art

Critics and Collectors

Lesson Overview

Artists are a key part of a community's cultural heritage, but so are the people who look at, enjoy, and buy artworks. Critics and collectors have been particularly important to African American artists living and working in Los Angeles. Students will analyze the four key artworks in this unit, see how art critics and art historians have described the artworks, and then write their own comments about another artwork. They will also explore the reasons why people collect art and other objects. The lesson culminates with students developing their own display of the community's artistic heritage.

Objectives

1. Art Criticism and Art History: Students analyze how artists, art critics, and art historians have described the artworks in this unit.

2. Aesthetics and Art Criticism: Students refer to philosophical and aesthetic issues that have been a concern for African American artists and write their own comments about an artwork.

3. Art Criticism and Art History: Students consider the importance of patrons of African American art, especially collectors and museums.

4. Art Making and Social Studies: Students organize a display to showcase the artistic heritage of their community, city, or state.

The attached Assessment Guides can be used to determine the level of mastery your students have achieved in reaching these objectives.

Preparation

Read through the lesson, carefully adapting it to your teaching style and available resources. Decide which activities are most appropriate for your students—primary students may be able to describe, interpret, and judge an artwork, but the philosophical

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and aesthetic issues are more appropriate for secondary students. Assemble necessary resources.

Time Requirements

Several lessons might be completed within two or three class periods, but students should be allowed at least two weeks to research the art history of their community, interview artists, and assemble their display. In addition, you will want to allow time for students to act as tour guides.

Activities: Critics and Collectors

Basic Activities

- Part I: Critics
- Part II: Collectors and Collections

African American Art

Critics and Collectors

Assessment Guides

Basic Activity: Part I
Critics

Beginner: Students can point out why critical reviews are important for artists.

Competent: Students can point out why critical reviews are important for artists and can compare their personal opinions with those of artists and critics.

Advanced: Students can point out why critical reviews are important for artists and can compare their personal opinions with those of artists and critics. Students are also able to write an essay about an artwork that contains a description, interpretation, and evaluation.

Basic Activity: Part II
Collectors and Collections

Beginner: Students can explain the role of collectors of African American art.

Competent: Students can explain the role of collectors of African American art, conduct research on local cultural heritage, and work with others to make a display.

Advanced: Students can explain the role of collectors of African American art, conduct research on local cultural heritage, and work with others to make a display. Students can also point out the importance of collecting and preserving the history and artistic heritage of a community.

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Critics and Collectors

Resources

Part I
Critics

- reproductions of the four key artworks
- copies of the Art Critic's Worksheet
- copies of artists' statements
- copies of reviewers' statements
- reproductions of works by other African American artists

Part II
Collectors and Collections

- research materials
- display materials

Critics and Collectors

Vocabulary

You may want to introduce the following vocabulary in conjunction with this lesson:

- aesthetics
- art critic
- art historian
- collector
- commission
- community
- cultural heritage
- description
- display
- evaluation
- heritage
- interpretation
- mainstream
- museum
- review

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African American Art

Critics and Collectors

Art Critic's Worksheet

Look briefly at the artwork and take two or three minutes to write what you think about it. Do you like it? Why or why not?

Now, study the artwork more closely. Answer the following questions:

What do you see first when you look at the work?

What is the artwork made of?

What people or things do you recognize?

Describe lines, shapes, and colors the artist used in the work. Is the work symmetrical or asymmetrical? Do you see any patterns?

Is the artwork realistic or abstract? Why do you think so?

What mood or feeling do you get from the artwork?

When you think you have seen everything, keep looking. What else do you notice?

Does this artwork remind you of any other artworks you have seen? Which ones?

What do you think the artwork means? Why?

Now that you have looked at the artwork more closely, do you like it? Why or why not?

African American Art

Critics and Collectors

Basic Activity: Part 1
Critics

Ask students if they have ever had feedback from a classmate or teacher about something that they have written or created.

- What kind of feedback have you received about your work?
- Did it help you rethink some of your ideas?
- Did it help you see things in new ways
- Did you make any changes to your work as a result?
- Why might you want others to respond to your work? (For feedback, but also
- to let other people know about what you have created.)
- Are there any reviews that you watch on television, hear on the radio, or read in newspapers, magazines, or on the Internet? (Students may watch movie reviewers such as Siskel and Ebert on television, hear book reviews over National Public Radio, or read reviews of computer games or new models of cars or clothing. Even sports writing can be considered a review of athletic performances. Students may also hear informal reviews from friends and fellow students.)
- Has watching, hearing, or reading a review ever made any difference about what you thought about movies, TV shows, music, books, or sports?

Overview Reminder:
Artists are a key part of a community's cultural heritage, but so are the people who look at, enjoy, and buy artworks. Students will

- analyze the four key artworks in this unit,
- see how art critics and art historians have described the artworks, and
- then write their own comments about another artwork.

The lesson culminates with students developing their own display of the community's artistic heritage.

Acknowledge that many people find it difficult to accept criticism but that it is often helpful for artists to have fresh perspectives. Visual art is a form of communication that

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is often beyond language, so artists depend on people, such as art critics and historians, who communicate in verbal ways, to translate their ideas. Critics, art historians, and viewers from various cultural backgrounds will be able to find and express, within the limits of language, different ideas they find in the work of visual artists. Artists may also want others to review their work so that people can become interested in viewing, discussing, and purchasing it. (For more about art criticism and the role critics play, see the Disciplines of Art chapter in Learning in and through Art, published by the Getty Education Institute.)

Explain to students that well-written reviews have

- descriptions (what the work looks like, how it was made, what materials were used, etc.)
- interpretations (what the reviewer thinks the work means)
- evaluations (whether the reviewer thinks the work is good, bad, and/or important—and why or why not)

Display reproductions of the four artworks in this unit. Divide students into four groups and provide each group with copies of one of the artworks and copies of a worksheet for discussing the piece. Students will individually study their group's assigned artwork and fill out the worksheet, exploring their own thoughts and feelings about the composition. They then will discuss their findings with the group.

Distribute copies of the background information on why the art maker wanted the artwork to look the way it does. Students will read the material provided and discuss

- the art makers' thoughts and feelings about their work
- how these thoughts and feelings compare with those of students

Give the groups copies of what has been written about each artist's work. Ask students to discuss whether they agree or disagree with these comments and why.

- Are reviewers' comments similar to the students' ideas?
- Do these comments challenge students' initial opinions about the artwork?
- Do the comments challenge students' decisions, as a group, about whether or not they like the artwork?
- How do the reviews of others compare with what the artists said about their work?

Tell students that they are going to act as art critics by writing an essay about an artwork that will include a description, interpretation, and evaluation. Display reproductions of artworks by African American artists and have students choose one about which they will write. (See Electronic and Other Resources for sources of artworks.) Students will complete the following steps:

- Refer to Lesson 2, Part II to remind students of the kinds of styles which influenced African American artists. (Or, for the philosophical/aesthetic issues about which African American artists have been concerned, they can refer to the sections on Artworld Context in each of the Q&A.)

- Students should spend some time gaining their own insights into the artwork before seeing anything written about it. They may use the Art Critic's Worksheet to help them think through their responses.

- Students then compile information about the artist, the medium and style she or he works in, the subject matter the artist is interested in, and what she or he has said about her or his art.

- Refer to Lesson 2, Part II to remind students of the kinds of philosophical/aesthetic issues about which African American artists have been concerned. Ask students to consider whether any of these issues might be important to the artist whose work they have chosen to critique.

- When students are satisfied that they have enough information about the artwork and the artist, ask them to write their essays.

On a bulletin board, display the reviews along with the copy of the artwork so that students may compare their ideas and reflect on ways their essays have helped the entire class learn more about the selected artists.

Basic Activity: Part 2
Collectors and Collections

Ask students if they collect anything, such as stuffed animals, sports cards, model cars, marbles, etc. Discuss the following questions:

- How did students begin collecting?
- Do they have friends or family who collect
- the same things?
- Do they read magazines or visit Web sites that discuss the things they collect?
- Are there other things they might like to collect one day?

Overview Reminder:
Artists are a key part of a community's cultural heritage, but so are the people who look at, enjoy, and buy artworks. Students will

- analyze the four key artworks in this unit,
- see how art critics and art historians have described the artworks, and
- then write their own comments about another artwork.

The lesson culminates with students developing their own display of the community's artistic heritage.

Tell students that art collectors can influence the work that artists do and help them become better known within the community. Note that individuals collect and commission art, but so do art galleries, museums, businesses, schools, the government, and churches. These individuals and organizations provide encouragement for artists by purchasing their work as well as inspiration to the community by making the work more widely available.

Discuss with students the importance of collectors of African American art. Art collectors preserve the art and memories of artists who have made contributions to cultural heritage. Individual collectors and African American institutions have played an important role when mainstream museums, corporations, and universities excluded the work of Black artists. Los Angeles has been fortunate to have the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company in the community. When the company constructed a new building in 1949, it was envisioned as a showcase for African American art. The artist William Pajaud collected many works for the building; the company also commissioned the artists Hale Woodruff and Charles Alston to paint a mural for the lobby that recorded

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African American achievements. Benjamin Horowitz, of the Heritage Gallery, has collected many of the works of Charles White as well as his private papers. The photographer Willie Robert Middlebrook now directs the programs at the Watts Towers Arts Center, a community space for developing artistic talent. The California African-American Museum collects and displays the work of locally and nationally known African American artists. Ask students:

- Why do we need spaces dedicated specifically to African American art? (Separate museum spaces allows African American artists to gain exposure and encourages research by scholars and enjoyment by art lovers.)

- What is the advantage of African American artists to be shown in mainstream museums? (Mainstream museums allow a more varied audience to be exposed the African American art and for it to be seen in the context of the work of mainstream American artists; however, African American artists have been, and continue to be, excluded form mainstream museums, therefore there is also a need for museums devoted specifically to African American art.)

If possible, arrange a class field trip to visit the California African-American Museum.

Explain to students that they are going to collect and display some of the art heritage of their own community, city, or state. This will involve research into the art forms in that region.

- Make a list of the kinds of things with which an art collector would be familiar. These might include knowledge about art styles, the kind of art that was popular during various periods, materials that artists used, and artists' lives and work.

- Explain to students that for this art heritage project they are going to find out about the visual artists who have contributed to the artistic heritage of their region. Students should think about including a variety of visual art forms, such as textiles, crafts, photography, folk art, painting, sculpture, prints, and architecture.

- Assign students to work in pairs to locate information about specific local artists and their work. They might look for information about historical artists and traditional art forms in local libraries or museums. Galleries, craft shops, and local fairs and festivals could have information about contemporary artists, postcards of their work, and artists' statements. Contemporary artists might be willing to come to the classroom to discuss their art with students. Students will need to either find pictures that they can photocopy or take pictures of artists and their work.

- Set aside a space in the classroom to assemble the information students have collected. Ask students to think of an interesting way to display their research,

pictures, and photographs. For example, students might want to paint pictures of buildings, then cut open the windows and doors, placing images of the visual artists inside along with pictures of their work. Another interesting display could consist of large cardboard boxes painted as kiosks, with information placed on all four sides. Small tape recorders placed in the exhibit could contain excerpts from taped interviews with individuals whose work is on display. If students have access to video equipment, they might videotape artists and show the tape as part of the exhibit.

- Invite other groups of students or local parents to examine the display so students can act as tour guides, informing visitors about the art and artists in their community. Teachers might also request that other places in the community, such as a library, community center, or museum, take the exhibit and expand it to include actual examples of artworks from the region. Ask students to think about how the work of these artists helps them to see the beauty and value of their community. How can this exhibit inform people in the community about the value of art and their own cultural heritage?

- Conclude the activity by asking students to think about how the many forms of cultural expression in the exhibit contribute to the art heritage of the community. Discuss the ways that art can add to the beauty of the environment, how it can provide a connection to history and to the spiritual well-being of people, and how it can inspire all of us, as human beings, to think and feel more deeply about ourselves, our neighbors, and our world.